

# The Marriage of Kitty

BY

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# THE MARRIAGE OF KITTY

Adapted from the French of  
"La Passerelle"

MADAME F. DE GRÉSAC AND MONSIEUR  
F. DE CROISSET

BY  
COSMO GORDON-LENNOX

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*Act of March 4, 1909.*

*Produced at the Duke of York's Theatre, London, Aug. 19th  
1902.*

### The Persons of the Play.

SIR REGINALD BELSIZE, Bart.....Mr. Leonard Boyne.  
JOHN TRAVERS, A Solicitor.....Mr. Gilbert Hare.  
NORBURY, A Man-Servant.....Mr. Lloyd Lowndes.  
HAMPTON, Travers' Clerk.....Mr. Lichfield Owen.  
MISS KATHERINE SILVERTON, " *Kitty*"..Miss Marie Tempest.  
MADAME DE SEMIANO.....Miss Ellis Jeffreys.  
ROSALIE, A French Maid.....Miss Elsie Chester.

ACT I.

John Travers' Office, Lincoln's Inn.

ACTS II AND III.

Lady Belsize's Villa on the Lake of Geneva.

A year is supposed to have elapsed between Acts I and II

# THE MARRIAGE OF KITTY.

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## ACT I.

SCENE:—*John Travers' office in Lincoln's Inn. Door R. Door L. U. E. Writing-table R. C. Large revolving chair R. of table. Fireplace, and looking-glass over mantel L. Telephone on table. Book shelves R. B. C.*

(*As curtain rises, HAMPTON is replacing two books in bookcase B. C. Telephone rings. HAMPTON crosses and takes it up and speaks.*)

HAMPTON (*speaking in telephone*). Hullo! Yes, this is Mr. Travers' office. Who is it? (*Pause*) Who? (*Pause*) Oh, Sir Reginald Belsize! Yes, Sir Reginald, I received both your telephone messages this morning. (*Pause*) No, Sir Reginald, not yet. I haven't seen Mr. Travers since you telephoned. (*Pause*) Yes; he'll be here shortly. We're expecting him every moment, (*Pause*) Very well—eleven-thirty—one moment, please—(*Makes pencil note of time. Pause*) Certainly, if a lady arrives before you, I'll ask her to wait. (*Pause—laughing—Pause*) No, Sir Reginald, I was not laughing—it is the young lady at the exchange. Good-bye. (*Ringing off*)

(*He crosses to c., meeting JOHN TRAVERS, who enters from door L. TRAVERS hands hat and stick to HAMPTON, who places them on book shelf B. C.*)

TRAVERS. Anyone called, Hampton?

HAMPTON. No, sir.

(TRAVERS crosses to R. of table, takes off gloves and stands opening letters.)

Sir Reginald Belsize is coming to see you at eleven-thirty. Sir Reginald is very anxious to see you; he has telephoned three times in the last half hour.

TRAVERS (*taking up glasses to read letter*). Very well, show him in when he arrives. I can see no one until he has gone.

HAMPTON. Sir Reginald said a lady would probably call to see you at the same time as himself.

TRAVERS. A lady? What name?

HAMPTON (*coming to table*). Sir Reginald didn't give any name, sir; he only said "a lady." (*Laughing*) He asked me to show her every attention in my power, sir. (*laughs*)

TRAVERS (*looking up and taking off glasses*). Ahem!

(HAMPTON checks himself.)

That will do.

HAMPTON. Yes, sir.

(*Crosses towards door L., stops, and returns to c.*)

Beg pardon, sir, I quite forgot. There's a young lady waiting to see you.

TRAVERS. I won't see anyone.

HAMPTON. She seems determined to wait and see you, sir.

TRAVERS. I haven't time. It's past eleven now. What's her name?

HAMPTON. Miss Silverton, sir—Miss Katherine Silverton.

TRAVERS. Miss Katherine Silverton? My god-daughter! Kitty!

HAMPTON. Will you see her, sir?

TRAVERS (*throws down glasses and letters*). Will I see her? Show her in at once—at once.

(HAMPTON crosses and opens door.)

Kitty! (*Crosses to c.*) Little Kitty in London.



HAMPTON. Will you step this way, Miss.

(Enter KITTY SILVERTON, an attractive young woman of twenty-eight; she is attractive, but dressed in an unsmart, country-made costume, carrying in her hand a small travelling bag—which she puts on the table as she throws her arms round TRAVERS' neck.)

KITTY (*kisses TRAVERS affectionately*). Ah, I knew you'd see me, godfather. (*puts bag on table coming down c.*)

TRAVERS. Why on earth didn't you write and let me know you were coming to London?

KITTY (*R. to TRAVERS*). Because you'd probably have told me to stay where I was, at Blackburn, whereas now—

TRAVERS (*L. to KITTY*). Now?

KITTY. Now it's too late. My trunks are in the cloak room at King's Cross, and my furniture follows in a few days.

TRAVERS (*C.*). Your furniture! Why, you talk as if you left the country for good.

KITTY. So I have.

TRAVERS. What?

KITTY. I have come to settle down in London. (*Sits in chair R. C.*)

TRAVERS. You've come to settle in—?

KITTY. London—exactly. You know, godfather, even when father was alive, life in Blackburn wasn't exactly a vortex of excitement, but after his death everything had to be sold. It was simply unbearable. My present fortune consists of ninety-seven pounds, eight shillings and fourpence half-penny. (*Moving bag nearer to TRAVERS*) I've got it there, in that bag.

TRAVERS. You've got your *capital* in that bag?

KITTY. Yes, ninety-seven pounds, eight shillings and fourpence half-penny.

TRAVERS. But that spells poverty.

KITTY. Yes. (*Laughs*)

TRAVERS. You seem to take it very cheerfully.

KITTY. Of course I do.

TRIVERS (*rises, crosses to E. of table and remains standing*). You absolutely astonish me. Your father had a magnificent business for a country solicitor. What did he do with it?

KITTY. I don't know—I think father was—er—rather young for his age.

TRIVERS. Ah—really—

KITTY. Come, godfather, I'm twenty-eight, quite an old maid, and I don't think I'm a fool.

TRIVERS. Anything but!

KITTY. Well, of course I used to notice things.

TRIVERS. Oh, you used to notice things. Such as—?

KITTY. Well, if by chance a *pretty* woman came to consult father, he—he—

TRIVERS. Yes?

KITTY. He used to give her his best attention.

TRIVERS. Indeed!

KITTY. Father was the best of fathers—charming—(*makes the movement*) delightful, affectionate,—but—but—well, he had a large heart. You might even call it a roomy heart. Like one of the big hotels—there's space in it for more than one family at a time.

(*They both laugh.*)

Ah, I can laugh about it now, but it was very serious, godfather. When I went into all the business, I found nothing but bills, milliner's bills,—bills by the thousand.

TRIVERS. Dear, dear, dear!

KITTY. And latterly the solicitor's business didn't bring us in any profits. On the contrary.

TRIVERS. What do you mean?

KITTY. Well, father worked for most of his lady clients gratuitously.

TRIVERS. Gratuitously? Good heavens!

KITTY. And that wasn't the worst of it. Father took their interests so much to heart that he used to back bills for them, even.

TRIVERS (*rises, crosses up towards window*). After that I'm not astonished there wasn't anything left.

(Comes down L. to KITTY) Well, what do you mean to do?

KITTY. I am willing to do anything to earn a livelihood. You'll help me find something, won't you, god-father? (*Rises and crosses to TRAVERS, who has gone c.*)

TRAVERS (*patting her affectionately*). Of course I will—of course I will. What a pity you're not a boy.

KITTY (*laughing*). Yes, it is. I'm afraid it's too late to do anything about that now. But there must be heaps of honorable professions for women.

TRAVERS. Yes, I suppose there are. But they're neither very lucrative nor very agreeable.

KITTY. Lots of women manage to put up with them. (*Sits on stool below table*) Let's hear what there is.

TRAVERS (*coming towards her*). Well—journalism.

KITTY. A lady journalist—oh! (*She makes a face of disgust*)

TRAVERS. You don't like the idea?

KITTY. I should hate to have to praise other women's frocks.

TRAVERS. How would you like to be a school-mistress?

KITTY. Should I have to teach lots of children?

TRAVERS (*laughing*). That would probably form part of your duties.

KITTY. Other people's children? (*With an expression of disgust*)

TRAVERS. Well, my dear, at present—

KITTY. Of course. What should I make at that?

TRAVERS. With luck, in time, you might get about a hundred pounds a year; but to begin with, I should say, about forty pounds.

KITTY. Forty pounds a year!

TRAVERS. About that.

KITTY. Three pounds, eight shillings and eight pence a month! (*Folding her arms and looking straight at him*) What do you propose I should do with that?

TRAVERS. Well, dress yourself.

KITTY. Do you suppose I could dress myself on three pounds, six shillings and eight pence a month?

TRAVERS. That is, I believe, the idea.

KITTY. It's absurd; and after all, I should probably end my days as an old maid in spectacles. (*Facing him*) Do you see me an old maid in spectacles?

TRAVERS. If you embrace that profession, I probably shall. Well, how would you like to be companion to an elderly lady?

KITTY. Oh, godfather! Companion to an elderly—Fancy spending your life making yourself agreeable to an elderly lady. It seems such waste of good raw material.

TRAVERS (*crossing to table and taking her hand*). How about manicuring?

KITTY (*draws her hand away*). What—after "The Gay Lord Quex?" (*Smacks his hand and pushes him away*) Certainly not.

TRAVERS (c.). Typewriting?

KITTY. Spoils your hands and sounds improper.

TRAVERS. Trade?

KITTY. Ah! I think I should like that.

TRAVERS. Why not go into a big shop—Marshall and Snellgrove's—Whiteley's—

KITTY. I couldn't stand up all day.

TRAVERS. Well, try for a bookkeeper's place.

KITTY. Oh, I couldn't sit down all day—I should die.

TRAVERS. Well, of course, if you won't stand up or sit down—

KITTY. Suppose I took up woman's work—painting—embroidery—

TRAVERS. Not a penny to be made at that. (*Takes her chin in his hand*) You wouldn't like to be a barmaid?

KITTY (*laughing*). In Glasgow I wouldn't mind. Seriously, what else is there?

TRAVERS. Well, of course, there is the stage. (*Crosses c.*)

KITTY. I'm afraid I couldn't act.

TRAVERS. I'm given to understand that that is not always essential to success.

KITTY. And have to learn a lot of stuff, and say it, whether you thought it silly or not—and to paint one's face—and let strange people kiss you—and sit up late at night. No, godfather, I think not.

TRAVERS. Well, I can't think of anything else.

KITTY. Well, it's very hard. Here am I, ready to do any mortal thing to earn my daily bread, unable to find a profession.

TRAVERS. Aren't you just a little difficult?

KITTY. Not at all. There's one profession you've forgotten, though.

TRAVERS. What's that?

KITTY. The old-fashioned profession for women, and on the whole the best paying one—marriage. Godfather, you'll have to find me a husband.

TRAVERS. Where am I to find you a husband?

KITTY. Oh, that's your business—of course he must not be an old man—or an invalid—or a fool.

TRAVERS. Well—there you are! There you are!

KITTY. I'm sure I don't ask much. I only want a man nice enough to fall in love with.

TRAVERS. That's just the difficulty.

KITTY. Oh, godfather, you'll never persuade me, with all your practice in the Divorce Court, you don't know lots of men who are only waiting to have their broken hearts mended.

TRAVERS. Yes, but once bit twice shy, you know.

KITTY. But you don't know how charming I am. I really can be quite a taking little person.

TRAVERS (*laughing*). Can you?

(KITTY *nods*.)

Yes, I believe you can. Well, I'll see what I can do for you—only you must give me time.

KITTY (*indicating bag*). As long as my ninety-seven pounds, eight shillings and fourpence half-penny lasts.

TRAVERS. I'll see what I can do. (*rings bell on table*) of course you'll lunch with me to-day?

*(Knock at door.)*

Come in.

*(HAMPTON enters, and crosses to c.)*

HAMPTON. Sir Reginald Belsize.

TRAVERS *(hurriedly)*. Just take Miss Silverton to my private room, then ask Sir Reginald in.

HAMPTON. This way, Miss.

*(HAMPTON crosses R., opens door—returns to L. Exit.)*

KITTY. Thank you. *(rises, crosses to door)* Good-bye till lunch time, godfather.

TRAVERS. Good-bye, my dear.

KITTY *(speaking at door)*. And don't forget my husband. *(returns for bag—is going—but turns and speaks in his ear)* And—one word—*(whispering)* I'm simply mad about dark moustaches.

TRAVERS. Go along with you.

*(She runs off R. He crosses laughing, and shuts door—then crosses to his chair R.)*

She's a perfect little dear!

*(HAMPTON enters, stands above door.)*

HAMPTON. Sir Reginald Belsize.

*(Enter SIR REGINALD BELSIZE, about thirty, smart looking, a little dandified in dress, he crosses to table R. c., excitedly.)*

SIR REGINALD. My dear friend!

*(They shake hands across table.)*

TRAVERS. How are you? Why, what's up? You seem excited.

SIR REGINALD. Excited, my dear chap. I'm in the seventh heaven of delight!

TRAVERS. I congratulate you.

SIR REGINALD. Wait ! I am also plunged in the lowest depths of despair. *(Crosses up and places hat and stick on bookcase at back)*



TRAVERS. You have my sincerest sympathy.

SIR REGINALD (*interrupting him*). Has a lady called here to see me?

TRAVERS. A lady? Ha! ha! ha! (*laughs boisterously*)

SIR REGINALD (*with great dignity*) My dear Travers, you're my oldest friend, well and good, but you are also my solicitor. To-day it is the Solicitor I have come to see.

TRAVERS. Ten thousand pardons, my dear Belsize! Pray be seated.

(THEY *half rise, look at each other—and then sit.*)

SIR REGINALD. You remember Madame de Semiano, of course?

TRAVERS. H—m—m. Tall, dark woman, isn't she?

SIR REGINALD (*in ecstasies*). Divinely tall! Superbly dark! The only possible type of woman.

TRAVERS. Really. (*leaning forward*) You excite my curiosity.

SIR REGINALD. Her figure is at once willowy and majestic, her eyes cruel and yet kind, her nose classical, yet alluring, and her mouth—my dear chap, you know I am something of a connoisseur in beauty, I've admired a few women in my time, but I assure you that the curl of Helen's upper lip—

TRAVERS. One moment! I thought that it was in my capacity of Solicitor that you—

SIR REGINALD. I beg your pardon, for the moment I was addressing the sympathetic friend.

TRAVERS. All right, fire away. (*He lounges back in his chair*)

SIR REGINALD. Where was I? (*Also lounging back*)

TRAVERS (*taking a cigarette and lighting it*). You were hanging on the curl of Madame de Semiano's upper lip. By the way, the last time we met, I think you said that a fair, fragile woman was the only possible type. If I do not mistake, it was apropos of a little Scotch girl—

SIR REGINALD (*rising slowly*). Really, I do not know that in your capacity as my Solicitor—

TRAVERS (*rises, puts down cigarette*). Your Solicitor! I beg your pardon. (*throws away cigarette, sits up stiffly*) Pray proceed.

(*They sit down again—half rising before doing so, as before.*)

You were saying that Madame de Semiano—

SIR REGINALD (*bending forward with air of making most important announcement*). Helen de Semiano has returned to London!

TRAVERS (*blankly*) Ah! Is Madame de Semiano connected with the case you wish to lay before me?

SIR REGINALD. Intimately.

TRAVERS. One moment, I think I do remember. She leased the house adjoining your late uncle's property in the summer of 1900.

SIR REGINALD. Exactly. A year before Uncle John died and left me his fortune.

TRAVERS. It was then—

SIR REGINALD. That I met her? Yes. I met her and fell in love with her at once. My dear chap, no one who has seen Helen in a white gown, and a garden hat could possibly resist her.

TRAVERS. Ah, then your late Uncle John—

SIR REGINALD. I am sorry to say anything that may cast a slur on poor Uncle John's memory—but he took a most unaccountable dislike to Helen de Semiano.

TRAVERS. Probably he had never seen her in a white gown and garden hat.

SIR REGINALD. Please be serious. Uncle John did his best to put an end to my attachment to Madame de Semiano.

TRAVERS. And succeeded?

SIR REGINALD. Temporarily. You see I had only £500 a year of my own, and Uncle John could disinherit me if he so pleased. Well, when Helen heard of this—

TRAVERS. Threw you over?



SIR REGINALD. Certainly not. Helen is the least mercenary woman in the world. But in regard to money matters she is—she is—

TRAVERS. Prudent—h—m—m?

SIR REGINALD (*nodding*). M—m—m—m.

(TRAVERS *sniffs*.)

Though, as she said, money to her was of no importance, she would not hear of my injuring my prospects for her, so suddenly one day she left England and went to live abroad.

TRAVERS. And you didn't follow her?

REGINALD. No, because soon after my uncle fell ill, and when he died twelve months later, and left me all his fortune, I had forgotten—

TRAVERS. You had forgotten Madame de Semiano?

SIR REGINALD. No, I had forgotten her address. Well, anyhow, I never saw her again till I met her by chance three days ago in Bond Street, stepping out of a victoria—and we are engaged to be married.

TRAVERS. Isn't it rather sudden?

SIR REGINALD. Sudden, after two years? Besides, no man who has seen Helen in a mauve dress, stepping out of a victoria in Bond Street, could possibly resist her.

TRAVERS. Well, it's quite a romance. She has remained faithful to you for two years?

SIR REGINALD. Yes—comparatively speaking.

TRAVERS. Comparatively speaking?

SIR REGINALD. Yes, she has always loved me, I know that of a certainty.

TRAVERS. How?

SIR REGINALD. She told me so in Bond Street.

TRAVERS. Ah!

SIR REGINALD. But in the interim she has engaged herself to a fellow named Churchill—a Captain Robert Churchill. But the moment she saw me again, she realized her mistake.

TRAVERS. Oh! (*Laughing quietly to himself*)

SIR REGINALD. Come—there is nothing particularly amusing in that, is there?

TRAVERS (*emphatically*). Nothing at all. Nothing. (*With change of tone*) But why do you wish to consult me?

SIR REGINALD. I am coming to that. My uncle left all his property to me by a will.

TRAVERS. Dated the 4th of August, 1900.

SIR REGINALD. That property is considerable.

TRAVERS. I should think so—£16,000 a year.

SIR REGINALD. Consequently I have the greatest respect and gratitude for Uncle John's kindness of heart.

TRAVERS. Naturally.

SIR REGINALD. But I cannot pay any tribute to his clearness of head.

TRAVERS. Eh?

SIR REGINALD. I allude to his unaccountable distrust of Helen. And I assure you that any man who has seen Helen in awHITE gown and a garden hat—my dear fellow, you couldn't possibly resist—

TRAVERS. You mentioned that before.

SIR REGINALD. But it is this very prejudice of Uncle John's that stands in the way of my marriage with Helen de Semiano.

TRAVERS. How?

SIR REGINALD. Don't you remember the terms of my Uncle's will?

TRAVERS. What?

SIR REGINALD (*feels in his pocket for papers*). Just you listen to this. (*Draws out paper and reads*) "Clause II. Provided that my said nephew, Sir Reginald Belsize shall be unmarried on the 1st day of September, 1902, the benefits bequeathed to him by this my Will shall be wholly forfeited, and pass to the said Mary Hawsworth—Spinster—absolutely.

TRAVERS. Well?

SIR REGINALD. Wait! "Clause III. Provided also that if my said nephew shall on the first day of September, 1902, be married to any woman who was formerly

the widow of a Peruvian subject, then the benefits herein bequeathed to him shall nevertheless in like manner be wholly forfeited and pass on to the said Mary Hawsorth absolutely." (*Putting Will copy back into his pocket*) Don't you understand now the difficulty I am in? It is a posthumous vengeance—

TRAVERS. Ahem!

SIR REGINALD. Of poor Uncle John's. Helen is not only a widow—she is a Peruvian widow.

(HAMPTON enters. Crosses c.)

HAMPTON. Madame de Semiano.

SIR REGINALD (*rises*). Show her in at once. (*To TRAVERS*) You'll excuse me?

HAMPTON (*at door L.*). If you'll kindly step this way, Madame.

(*Enter MADAME DE SEMIANO, a handsome woman of about thirty, tall, dark and extremely well dressed.*)

(*Exit HAMPTON.*)

SIR REGINALD (*crosses to meet her*). Helen! My dear!  
(*TRAVERS rises.*)

HELEN. My dear!

SIR REGINALD (*kisses her hand, then holding it*). It seems an age since I saw you.

HELEN. Not since ten o'clock.

SIR REGINALD. And it is now twelve. It is an age.

(*THEY both sigh, he kisses her hand.*)

TRAVERS. (*coughs*) Ahem!

HELEN (*starting, as she sees TRAVERS*). Oh! (*Signing to SIR REGINALD to introduce TRAVERS*) Reginald, please—(*indicating TRAVERS*)

SIR REGINALD. It's only dear old Jack Travers—my dearest friend. Let me introduce Madame de Semiano.

(*HELEN bows.*)

He knows all about it. (*Takes her wrap off and puts it on chair B. C.*)

TRAVERS. Won't you sit down?

(*She crosses and sits R. C. SIR REGINALD places chair for her.*)

SIR REGINALD (*taking her hand and looking into her eyes*). Child, how tired you look. You've been over-doing it.

HELEN. My nerves are rather over-wrought. (*taking up Brief and undoing the tape*) I've had a most trying morning. I have received a very distressing letter from Captain Churchill.

TRAVERS (*watching his papers nervously*). Of course, of course.

HELEN. Mr. Travers, I have the greatest horror in the world of being considered mercenary. Money has no attraction for me whatever.

SIR REGINALD (*gazing at her admiringly*). Ah! (*Sits in chair L. C.*)

HELEN. Of course the moment I had seen Reginald again, I wrote to Captain Churchill, breaking off our (*tearing up Brief*) engagement, and announcing that I had—

TRAVERS. Made other arrangements.

HELEN. Exactly. His reply reached me this morning. He accuses me of preferring Reginald to him, solely on account of Reginald's superior fortune.

SIR REGINALD. That's absurd on the face of it. (*With self-complacency*)

HELEN. Of course it is, but it's very distressing to me. I really hardly know what I am doing. I— (*Crunches Brief up into a ball and pounds it on the table*)

TRAVERS (*puts his hand on hers*). Excuse me!,

(*She looks up in surprise.*)

These are rather important papers. (*Takes them from her*)

HELEN (*releasing her hand*). I beg your pardon. I really am—

TRAVERS. Not at all. (*He takes Brief, smoothes it out and replaces it*) Now the first thing to do is to get a copy of the will. (*Going up back*)

HELEN (*promptly*) I have one here. (*Taking it from her bag*)

TRAVERS (*surprised*). Eh? (*Returns to table*)

HELEN. Yes, as I said just now, my horror—my positive horror of anything like interested motives almost amounts to a disease, but in these cases one cannot be too prudent, so I went to Somerset House—

(*She gives the copy to TRAVERS, who sits down and puts on glasses.*)

REGINALD. Dearest, you will tire yourself—I know you will.

HELEN. There is no fatigue I would not undergo for you.

SIR REGINALD. Darling! (*He blows her a kiss*)

TRAVERS (*looking at will*). This seems very clear.

HELEN. Is there no way of evading it?

TRAVERS. H'm. I wonder. There is always one course open to you.

SIR REGINALD and HELEN. Yes?

TRAVERS. I take it that you are both deeply and sincerely attached to each other?

SIR REGINALD. I am deeply—Helen, am I madly, devotedly attached to you?

HELEN. Silly boy!

SIR REGINALD. Why, I—I—

TRAVERS. Yes, we will take it that you are—and you, Madame de Semiano?

HELEN. Life without Reginald would be purgatory. Life with Reginald would be heaven.

SIR REGINALD (*rises and crosses to her*). Our mutual love—

(*HELEN gives her hand to SIR REGINALD, who kisses it.*)

HELEN —stands far above all earthly considerations.

TRAVERS. Well then, Reginald has £500 a year inde-

pendently of his Uncle's legacy. Marry each other and disregard the will.

HELEN. And lose the fortune?

TRAVERS. Yes.

HELEN (*dropping REGINALD'S hand*). Oh!

SIR REGINALD (*dropping her hand*). Oh!

HELEN. I love Reginald too well to allow him to make such a sacrifice.

SIR REGINALD. I am far too fond of you to ask you to allow me to. I know it would embitter your life. (*Crosses to fireplace and up to back of c. chair—leans on it*)

HELEN (*taking up another Brief and tearing it*). Oh, it's too provoking to have such a fortune—

TRAVERS. Eh?

HELEN. I mean such happiness within one's grasp and to let it slip.

(*TRAVERS rises and opens drawer.*)

(*Crumpling Brief as before*) It's preposterous!

SIR REGINALD. It's cruel!

TRAVERS (*takes briefs off end of table—puts them in drawer*). Excuse me. (*Takes Brief from HELEN, puts it in drawer and substitutes blotter, locks the drawer and sits smiling at her in a conciliatory manner*)

HELEN. Can you suggest nothing? You're a solicitor, it's your business to know how to evade the law.

TRAVERS. I beg your pardon? (*Reading the will*) Stay! Perhaps there is a way!

HELEN. What is it?

SIR REGINALD. What is it? (*Comes and sits on stool at end of table, back to audience. He follows the conversation—looking first at one and then at the other*)

TRAVERS (*reading will*). The will says that by the 1st of September you must have married someone who is neither a Peruvian nor a widow. (*Puts down will—takes up glasses*) Well, marry someone who is neither the one nor the other.

HELEN. What! (*jumping up*)



SIR REGINALD. Never!

TRAVERS (*rises and tries to calm them*). Wait! I only mean a transitory marriage.

HELEN. Transitory?

TRAVERS. Temporary, if you prefer the word.

SIR REGINALD. Temporary?

TRAVERS. Exactly.

(SIR REGINALD and HELEN sit. TRAVERS remains standing.)

Reginald once married—

(HELEN puts her hand on REGINALD'S, he kisses it.)

—his uncle's fortune is irrevocably his.

SIR REGINALD. Dearest!

HELEN. My darling!

TRAVERS. At the end of a short time a divorce is arranged between his wife and himself, and he is free to marry you.

HELEN (*rising and pacing up L. and back again*). I refuse to allow any such thing. The idea of Reginald marrying a wife.

TRAVERS. She will not be his wife in reality—only for form's sake, to satisfy the law. She will hold the position of Reginald's wife in the eyes of the world. (*Sits again*) And of course, in order to avoid suspicion, Reginald cannot very well quarrel with his wife till after they have been married about eighteen months, or a year at the earliest.

HELEN. It is sometimes done sooner.

TRAVERS. Yes, but people don't admit it for about eighteen months.

HELEN (*rises and again crosses L.*) A year's separation from Reginald—I couldn't bear it.

SIR REGINALD (*rises and crosses to HELEN*). Of course you couldn't bear it. (*He brings her back and places her chair and stands C.*)

HELEN (*waving him off*). Besides, where will you find a woman to accept such a position?

TRAVERS (*sits again*). London's a wonderful place, you can get almost anything you want, by paying for it.

HELEN. And pray what guarantee have I that Reginald wouldn't make love to his wife?

TRAVERS. Reginald's affection for you is the best possible guarantee.

HELEN. Thank you, I have no confidence in men.

TRAVERS. Well, in Reginald's wife then. I propose to find you a thoroughly trustworthy woman.

HELEN. I have not the smallest confidence in women.

TRAVERS. I assure you that the young lady I shall find you—

HELEN (*rises*). Young lady! Why a *young* lady?

TRAVERS. To avoid suspicion Reginald must marry a possible woman.

SIR REGINALD (*coming towards her*). Of course—of course.

HELEN (*glares at him*). Thank you! (*Sitting*) I know Reginald, it's too dangerous. I refuse!

TRAVERS. As you like. But it seems a pity. I have just the right person for you in my eye.

SIR REGINALD. A wife?

TRAVERS. Yes.

HELEN. Young?

TRAVERS. Er—thirty.

HELEN. Oh! An old maid! (*Picks up roller*)

TRAVERS (*suppressing a smile*). Er—er—if you like.

SIR REGINALD. Pretty?

TRAVERS. Charming!

HELEN (*rises, crosses L. and back again*). Charming! That settles it. I won't hear of it!

TRAVERS. But if I answer for her absolute loyalty?

HELEN. A woman's loyalty? Ha! ha! (*Sits, begins to tear paper*)

SIR REGINALD. Of course, if you've neither confidence in man's love, or woman's loyalty, there's no more to be said. We'd better give it up. (*Crosses to fireplace and round back to c. again*)

TRAVERS. H'sh! H'sh! But if we can arrange that



once the ceremony is over, Reginald should not see his wife again?

HELEN. Then I shall have confidence in them both. I am not really at all a suspicious woman.

SIR REGINALD. But is that possible?

TRAVERS. Perfectly. You will announce to your friends that after the wedding you will go abroad to spend your honeymoon.

SIR REGINALD. Well?

TRAVERS. Well, after the wedding you will start for abroad.

HELEN (*rises*). To spend his honeymoon! Never! Never! Never!

(TRAVERS *rises*, SIR REGINALD *comes and places HELEN in a chair*.)

TRAVERS. If you will allow me—

SIR REGINALD (*to HELEN*). Listen to the Solicitor.

TRAVERS. You, on your side accompanied by a companion of some sort—by the way, have you an elderly lady friend whom you can trust with your secret?

HELEN. I have a most devoted Aunt Eliza.

TRAVERS. Excellent! You and your Aunt, as if by accident, get into the same carriage as the newly married couple, you all travel together as far as Calais, where Reginald's wife leaves you for a destination to be arranged—and Reginald and you, chaperoned by your devoted Aunt Maria can set off abroad together.

HELEN. Very well, under those conditions, I accept.

SIR REGINALD. My love!

HELEN. But this lady must thoroughly understand that if she allows Reginald to so much as squeeze her hand, she forfeits her settlement.

TRAVERS. Oh! Quite! Quite, of course!

HELEN. And now where is this person to be found?

TRAVERS. She is here.

HELEN. Here? (*She gives a quick look at both men*)

TRAVERS. She only arrived from the country this morning.

HELEN. Oh! An awkward country girl.

TRIVERS (*repressing a smile*). Er—if you like.

SIR REGINALD. Do you know much about her?

TRIVERS. She is my goddaughter. Her father died lately and she came to me to entreat me to find her some employment.

SIR REGINALD (*crosses to top of table*). Do you think she will consent?

TRIVERS. She is ready to do anything honest to assure the point of money.

SIR REGINALD. Yes! Yes!

TRIVERS. Of course she will. It's an arrangement which is equally advantageous to all parties. Thanks to my goddaughter, you will be able to marry without loss of income.

(HELEN *again puts her hand on SIR REGINALD'S arm. He kisses it.*)

SIR REGINALD. Dearest!

TRIVERS. Thanks to you, my goddaughter's future is assured.

HELEN. Very well, that's settled. (*Rising, the blotting paper pad with the blotting paper hanging off it in her hand*) But—

SIR REGINALD (*comes L. to HELEN*). But what?

HELEN. I should like to have a look at this person.

TRIVERS (*ringing the bell*). Certainly, nothing is easier, but I had better explain the matter to her first.

(*Enter HAMPTON L., crosses to top of table.*)

Tell the young lady I should like to see her here for a few minutes.

(*Exit HAMPTON.*)

(SIR REGINALD *crosses up to door L. TRIVERS crosses to c. back.*)

If you don't mind waiting in the next room for a few moments.

(HELEN crosses up to SIR REGINALD.)

I'll explain to her what we are asking her to do, and if she consents— (*Sees the torn pad in HELEN'S hand*)  
One moment— (*Takes blotting pad from her*)

(Exit HELEN, apologising, followed by SIR REGINALD.)

(TRAVERS looks at the pad and then throws it, with a gesture of annoyance, into the basket on table. Knock at door R.)

Come in!

(KITTY enters, crosses to C. HAMPTON follows and exit L.)

KITTY. You want me, godfather?

TRAVERS. Yes; sit down.

(*She crosses and sits in armchair L. c. He laughingly crosses up L., shuts door after HAMPTON—she watching him as he does so—then he comes c.*)

I want to talk to you about your future.

KITTY. What! Already?

TRAVERS. Yes, already.

KITTY. Well, you haven't lost much time.

TRAVERS. I should think I hadn't. You only arrived at twelve and by one o'clock I've found you a situation.

KITTY. A good one?

TRAVERS. Superb.

KITTY. A lucrative one?

TRAVERS. Magnificent.

KITTY. And what have I got to do?

TRAVERS. Nothing. Simply to live luxuriously and quietly.

KITTY. Are you sure it's respectable?

TRAVERS. Absolutely.

KITTY. You're not laughing at me?

TRAVERS. Not at all. Come, can't you guess what it is?

KITTY (*quickly*). A marriage?

TRAVERS. You've hit it first time.

KITTY (*rises—crosses to him excitedly*). You mean to say you've found me a husband, in the space of an hour?

TRAVERS. Yes.

KITTY. A rich husband?

TRAVERS. Very rich.

KITTY. Oh! I know. A horrid old man. Thank you—you needn't trouble. (*Turns to fireplace*)

TRAVERS (*moving towards her*). He's not at all old.

KITTY (*turns to him again*). Not old! Then he's got a humped back, or a wall eye.

TRAVERS. Not at all. Five feet ten inches, the best of health, very good looking.

KITTY (*crosses to him with delight*). Good looking? You say he's good looking?

TRAVERS. You can see for yourself. A gentleman, charming in every respect, well born, a baronet—

KITTY. And he wants to marry me?

TRAVERS. And he wants to marry you.

(*She skips joyfully towards table R., delightful—then turns quickly to him.*)

KITTY. Where has he seen me?

TRAVERS. He's never seen you.

KITTY. He's never seen me—then why should he want to marry me?

TRAVERS. I'll explain to you; the marriage that I am going to propose to you, it is not quite an ordinary marriage.

KITTY. Evidently. But in what way?

TRAVERS. It is more or less a temporary marriage.

KITTY. I beg your pardon?

TRAVERS. Temporary and transitory. It will only last a certain time. A year or eighteen months at the outside. After that you will regain your liberty.

KITTY. I don't understand. You say I am to be married.

TRAVERS. By the Registrar.

KITTY. Ah!

TRIVERS. Of course you won't live with your husband.

KITTY. Never?

TRIVERS. Never.

KITTY. Then he doesn't want me to be his wife?

TRIVERS. In the eyes of the world alone; he is willing to make a generous settlement on you, on your wedding day.

KITTY (*sits excitedly on stool below table*). I don't think I understand. You say there is a young, rich and delightful man who wants to marry me, without having seen me, without knowing me—

TRIVERS. Yes.

KITTY. Who wants to become my husband for a year or eighteen months, on condition that I should never be his wife.

TRIVERS. Yes.

KITTY. And he is willing to settle money on me?

TRIVERS. Exactly.

KITTY. But why, in Heaven's name?

TRIVERS. His uncle is just dead.

KITTY. I can't see what that's got to do with it.

TRIVERS. He has left him a very large fortune, about £16,000 a year, on condition that by the first of September he shall be the husband of a lady who is neither a Peruvian nor a widow.

KITTY. What an extraordinary will.

TRIVERS. I don't know—you see the uncle had taken a great dislike to a lady who happens to be both a Peruvian and a widow, whom the nephew—

KITTY. Didn't happen to dislike?

TRIVERS. Exactly. So you see in order to fulfill the conditions of the will—

KITTY. He's got to marry any old thing, me, for instance.

TRIVERS. You understand?

KITTY. I think so. Well—well—well.

TRIVERS. You see, here are two people, anxious to be bound in the chains of matrimony.

KITTY. And I am to be the missing link. The first rung of the ladder that leads to fortune.

TRAVERS. And you'll be a very lucky woman. Once all this business is ended you'll be a rich woman, and you'll be able to marry anyone you please.

KITTY. Yes, but all the same—

TRAVERS. Well, what is it now?

KITTY. Do you think it quite—right?

TRAVERS. Why not? Supposing later you do fall in love with someone, and he marries you, thinking he's marrying a widow. Do you suppose he'll complain?

KITTY. You seem to have settled it all, don't you?

TRAVERS. Well, will you do it?

KITTY. Well, of course—it's an opportunity—

TRAVERS. I should think it was. I shall never find you anything half so good.

KITTY. Very well. I accept. But on one condition.

TRAVERS. Which is?

KITTY. That we're not married in church. I'm going to keep that for number two.

TRAVERS. By all means.

KITTY (*rising and going to him*). And when are we to be married?

TRAVERS. As soon as possible.

(*She starts, he catches her hand.*)

We'll arrange about that at once, all four of us. They're in there. (*Pointing to door L.*)

KITTY. What—the Peruvian widow? (*She sniggers*)

TRAVERS. Yes, I'll introduce you to them at once. (*Moves towards door*)

KITTY. At once? In this old rag and my hair all out of curl?

TRAVERS (*stops c.*). Of course. You look very nice. (*Again about to move c., stops and looks at her*) The deuce! Supposing the lady thinks you look too nice?

KITTY (*whistles*). She's jealous then?

TRAVERS. Jealous—I should think she was.

KITTY. Ah—that's bad.



TRAVERS. Couldn't you make yourself look a little ugly? (*Coming to her*)

KITTY. Of course I can. Every woman can make herself look ugly. That's not the difficulty in life. Wait a minute and I'll show you a Kitty who wouldn't disturb even a Peruvian widow's peace of mind. (*Crosses to fireplace*)

TRAVERS (*crosses up behind her*). That's right.

(KITTY *takes off collarette and hands it to TRAVERS—he puts it on book-case c., and returns to her. KITTY then pulls out lace collar and spreads it over her dress—then undoes her hair—takes off some false curls and puts them in TRAVERS' hand.*)

KITTY. Here, take that.

(TRAVERS, *laughing, crosses and puts them lower end of writing table.*)

Now, godfather, plait my hair.

(TRAVERS *crosses back and makes a plait of her hair.*)

All the length. (*Making the gesture*)

(*When that is done, TRAVERS comes c. KITTY crosses down L. c. undoing her waistband, and letting out her waist.*)

Nothing is so injurious to health as tight lacing.

(TRAVERS *laughs, crosses round R. of table and picks up glasses, KITTY then gives her skirt a twist and makes her dress look very ill fitting.*)

There—that is so apt to happen when one is travelling. (*Then crosses to fireplace and sees tape on Brief*) Wait a minute. (*Takes tape and ties it in a bow round her neck. Crosses to table R. c.*) There, that's the latest fashion in Blackburn. (*Sees TRAVERS with glasses in his hands, takes them from him and puts them on*) Here—give me those! (*striking attitude*) Allow me to introduce you to Miss Katherine Silverton—just up from the country.

TRAVERS. Splendid! (*Crosses round to c.*) Now! You've made up your mind to carry it through?

KITTY. Absolutely.

TRAVERS. Then I'll bring them in?

KITTY. You may.

TRAVERS. (*opens door and calls*). Madame de Semlano! Sir Reginald Belsize!

(MADAME DE SEMIANO *enters hurriedly, but on seeing KITTY, smiles approvingly. REGINALD enters, crosses down L. not noticing KITTY, who stands half back to them.*)

Allow me to introduce my goddaughter, Kitty—Madame de Semlano—Sir Reginald Belsize.

(REGINALD *turns and sees KITTY, who bows awkwardly and smirks, then flips her pigtail. REGINALD starts and hides his discomfort behind his hat. TRAVERS crosses to his chair R. of table.*)

Well, shall we come to business at once? I've told my goddaughter everything, and she accepts.

(KITTY *bows and smirks again, catches sight of her false curls on table and covers them with some letters.*)

HELEN. (*looking KITTY up and down*). Ah! (*anxiously*). Miss Silverton quite understands that it is to be purely a marriage of formality?

TRAVERS. Oh, thoroughly.

HELEN. And Miss Silverton thoroughly understands that she forfeits her settlement—

SIR REGINALD. (*hitting her on the arm with his hat*). Quite unnecessary. Quite unnecessary. (*crosses to back c.*)

(*The clock strikes.*)

HELEN. Good heavens! One o'clock and I'm going out to lunch.



(REGINALD picks up her wrap.)

TRAVERS. (*aside to KITTY across table*). Well! What do you think of him?

KITTY. H'm! He'll do.

(TRAVERS crosses up back c.)

HELEN. (*aside to REGINALD*). She seems a nice little woman.

SIR REGINALD. (*putting wrap on HELEN*). Oh, she'll do—under the circumstances.

HELEN. Good-bye!

TRAVERS. Good-bye. (*Crosses to door*)

HELEN (*bowing to KITTY*). Good-bye, Miss Silverton. (*Crosses to door*)

KITTY (*bowing awkwardly*). Good-bye, madame.

TRAVERS (*showing HELEN and SIR REGINALD out*). Well! (*As HELEN crosses her*) What do you think of her?

HELEN. Ideal! Positively ideal!

(ALL three are at door.)

(Exit HELEN followed by SIR REGINALD who scowls at TRAVERS.)

(TRAVERS shuts door, bursts out to laughing, crosses to KITTY who takes his hands and falls into chair B. C., roaring with laughter as the Curtain falls.)

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT I.

## ACT II.

SCENE:—*Sitting-room in KITTY'S villa on the Lake of Geneva. Terrace at back leading to garden. Door R. U. E., leading to KITTY'S bedroom. R. I. E. door. Door down L., windows up B. C. Fireplace between doors in flat R.)*

*(At rise of Curtain ROSALIE standing L of table, has laid soup spoon, fish and two other forks, and pudding spoon and fork. NORBURY standing above table, has laid fish, meat and small knife—crosses to window humming—and polishing the other knives with cloth.)*

NORBURY *(looking out of window towards L.)*. Hullo! Who's that walking with 'er ladyship in the garden?

*(ROSALIE crosses up to B. C. and looks out, then crosses to top of table, laying forks and spoons as before at top of table.)*

ROSALIE. A monsieur who 'as just arrived from London.

NORBURY. Who is 'e? *(Comes R. of table and lays knives)*

ROSALIE. Milady's godfather.

NORBURY. 'Er godfather! 'Er godfather! *(Stands c. laughing)*

ROSALIE. Oh, Monsieur Norbury, you 'ave a stupid laugh. If 'e is not her godfather, who do you suppose 'e is?

*(NORBURY crosses to butler's tray R., whistles the "Honeysuckle and the Bee.")*

Oh, Monsieur Norbury, you are cynique—cynical.

*(Crosses to B. of table, arranges knives and forks)*

NORBURY (*takes up table spoons*). Perhaps I am, Mam'zelle. I 'ave always lived with the best families of the British aristocrâcy, and that makes a man's thoughts run rather on the seamy side of life. (*Places table spoons R. end of table—leans over towards ROSALIE*) Mam'zelle, do you suppose 'er ladyship is really married?

ROSALIE. Parbleu! of course I do.

NORBURY. Well, I don't! (*Crosses to butler's tray for sugar dredger*) We've been a year with milady, and we've never seen the slightest sign of a husband. (*Puts dredger on table C. after polishing it*) There's not even a photograph of him in the house. (*Crosses to table L. C., looks to see if all is right*)

ROSALIE. Milady say 'e is in the West Indies.

NORBURY (*at top of table—giving a final look at it*). The West Indies! The West Indies isn't a recognised postal address. Why is 'e in the West Indies?

(*Band heard playing outside.*)

ROSALIE. Milady says he is obliged to voyage on business.

NORBURY. Business—what sort of business?

ROSALIE. No business of yours. (*Goes round piano*)

NORBURY. Yes, it is. (*Crosses to above fireplace for chair*) She ain't got no right not to tell us more about 'im. It's treating us like strangers. (*Puts chair above table*)

ROSALIE (*coming L. of piano*). You know 'e's a baronet—

NORBURY. When you've lived in the best 'ouses of the British aristocracy, Mamzelle, you'll know that's no certificate of character. (*Crosses up B. C. and brings down chair—and places it R. of table*)

ROSALIE. Say nothing. The only way you can be sure not to say something stupid. (*Tidies cushions on settee*).

NORBURY. You're not very polite, mam'zelle.

ROSALIE. You're not very charitable, Monsieur Norbury.

NORBURY. Well, any way, you don't know any more than I do.

*(Crosses to butler's tray and lays one champagne, one port, one claret at top of table, then puts salt, pepper and mustard at R. and L. ends of table, and finishes in time to exit at cue.)*

ROSALIE. I 'ave great confidence in milady, which I shall not withdraw without very good reason.

*(Crosses up and Exits into bedroom.)*

*(Enter KITTY and TRAVERS from L. to C.—KITTY comes in, folds up sunshade and puts it B. C.)*

TRAVERS *(standing in verandah)*. What a charming villa you've got here.

KITTY. Oh, it's comfortable enough.

TRAVERS. And what a beautiful view. You must look forward to watching the sun set in the evening.

KITTY *(coming to table L. C.—pulling off gloves and putting them on piano)*. It's about all I've to look forward to.

TRAVERS *(coming down C.)*. Your house is a complete success. It's pretty, it's homelike, above all, it looks "lived in."

KITTY. Didn't I tell you, godfather, that I was the most domesticated of women.

*(ROSALIE enters, crosses down and puts plate of rolls on L. table.)*

TRAVERS. Do you dine here? *(indicating room)*

KITTY. Yes, in the summer. *(taking off hat—to SERVANTS)* You can go. I'll arrange the flowers. *(Puts hat on piano)*

*(NORBURY gives a final look at table then exits, taking off tray, followed by ROSALIE.)*

*(KITTY points to settee, motioning TRAVERS to sit; he crosses and sits down.)*

KITTY. Now we can talk quietly. I've such a lot to

say to you. (*Crosses to table R. C. for two vases*) Fancy! I haven't seen you for over a year.

TRAVERS. Not since your wedding day, when we were starting off to take possession of this villa.

KITTY (*fills first vase as she talks*). My husband's wedding present. It was very nice of him to give it to me, because it wasn't stipulated for in our agreement. It was really a charming attention on his part.

TRAVERS. On *my* part. It was my idea.

KITTY (*disappointed*). Oh!

TRAVERS. But he made no difficulty. His great ambition was, that people should say that he always does the right thing.

KITTY (*with meek pomposity*). I am the wife of the gentleman who always does the right thing. What an honour.

TRAVERS (*takes out his cigarette case, holds it up*). May I?

KITTY. Of course, godfather. By the way, godfather, how are they getting on? (*Crosses and puts vase on table and returns R. C.*)

TRAVERS. Who?

KITTY (*filling second vase*). My husband and that Peruvian person? He got his fortune all right, I suppose?

TRAVERS. Oh yes, he got his fortune all right.

KITTY. And is Madame de Semiano as much in love with him as ever?

TRAVERS. I think she's still anxious to be married.

KITTY. Do you mean to say she isn't in love with him?

TRAVERS. Oh yes. Probably rather less than she says. Certainly a great deal less than he believes.

KITTY. But surely a woman who is as jealous as that—

TRAVERS. Oh—what does jealousy prove?

KITTY. Well, it proves that she's afraid of—

TRAVERS. Of losing him. I should think so. Reggie's a rich man, and she hasn't a penny.

KITTY. But Captain Churchill was pretty well off, wasn't he?

TRAVERS. Nothing to compare with Reggie. Reggie's a baronet—Reggie's got a castle in Scotland—Reggie's got a yacht—Reggie's got a house in Grosvenor Square. Oh! He's an ideal match.

KITTY (*crosses and puts other vase on table R. C.*). I'm sure I don't blame her for snatching at such a chance, after all she's not so very—

TRAVERS. You're no judge of women—you're a woman.

KITTY. Do you mean to say that we're not capable of appreciating—

TRAVERS. I think you're more capable of depreciating.

KITTY. Talking of depreciation—I should like to know what Madame de Semiano was saying to you about me the day of my wedding.

(TRAVERS *laughs.*)

I knew it. What did she say, godfather? Tell me what she said?

TRAVERS. Well, my dear, as you got yourself up on your wedding day as the same insignificant little country girl that she already knew—

KITTY. Oh, I struck her as insignificant—did I? (*Crosses and sits on settee*) And Reggie—how did I strike him?

TRAVERS. Oh, about the same.

KITTY (*vexed*). Oh, indeed!

TRAVERS. Oh, *how* like a woman! You're angry because you succeeded so well in doing what you wanted to.

KITTY. I'm not annoyed—

TRAVERS. Oh! Oh! Oh!

KITTY. Well, you'll admit, godfather, that if I'd liked—

TRAVERS. Well, what could you have done?

KITTY. I could have upset that Peruvian widow—and perhaps have left a few regrets in my husband's heart.

TRAVERS. Whatever have you got to do with your husband's heart?

KITTY (*she looks at him sideways*). Oh, nothing, of course. (*Laughing*)



TRIVERS. Tell me, do you like living here? Are you happy?

KITTY. 'M—'m—'m—ye—es.

TRIVERS. Only 'm 'm 'm ye—es—like that?

KITTY. Yes, that's all.

TRIVERS. Are you bored?

KITTY. Sometimes.

TRIVERS. But you've lots of occupation?

KITTY. Yes.

TRIVERS. You work?

KITTY. Yes.

TRIVERS. You paint?

KITTY. Yes.

TRIVERS. You play the piano?

KITTY. Till my fingers ache.

TRIVERS (*pointing to pile of books*). And you read?

KITTY. Till my head aches.

TRIVERS. And, in spite of all that—you're bored?

KITTY. Yes.

TRIVERS. Why?

KITTY. Because I hate living alone. (*Rises, crosses to window, looks out*)

TRIVERS (*after a pause*). Why don't you engage a companion?

KITTY. A lady companion?

TRIVERS. Of course.

KITTY. Oh, that wouldn't meet the case at all. (*Coming down c.*) If you only knew how I am longing to have a husband—who won't spend his honeymoon with another woman.

(*Enter ROSALIE R., crosses to c.*)

ROSALIE. 'As milady any letters for the post?

KITTY. No. Godfather?

(*ROSALIE crosses to piano.*)

TRIVERS. No—er—yes. (*Rises, crosses to R.*)

KITTY. Then make haste and write it now. You'll find me in the garden.

TRIVERS. Very well.

(Exit TRAVERS B.)

(ROSALIE at piano, arranging music.)

KITTY (*crosses up R. C. for sunshade—to ROSALIE*).  
Dinner at seven o'clock, Rosalie.

ROSALIE. Bien, madame.

(NORBURY enters with fruit salad and puts it on table  
down R.)

KITTY. Don't forget to ice the champagne, Norbury.

NORBURY. No, madame.

KITTY. And a bottle of Vichy water for my godfather.  
A man's appetite to cater for! (*Opens sunshade*) What  
luck!

(Goes to verandah, and off L.)

NORBURY (*crosses to c.*). Iced champagne! For her  
godfather! And you ask me to believe she's got a hus-  
band!

(Door bell rings off L.)

ROSALIE. Go along, Mr. Norbury—that is the door bell.

NORBURY. Oh! I shan't bother! Marie will answer it.

ROSALIE. Don't be so lazy—go along.

(ROSALIE crosses to small table c. for tray, etc.,—then  
crosses R. C. NORBURY crosses to L., is about to go off  
when REGGIE enters with hat on, coat over his left  
arm, and small suit-case in left hand.)

SIR REGINALD (*crosses to c.*). Is Lady Belsize at home?

ROSALIE (R. C.). Milady is in the garden. Pardon,  
Monsieur, who shall I have the honour of announcing to  
Milady?

SIR REGINALD. Sir Reginald Belsize.

NORBURY (*who has come L. C.*). Never!

SIR REGINALD. What do you mean—never?

NORBURY. Beg pardon, Sir Reginald,—but—

ROSALIE. Milord is the husband of milady?

SIR REGINALD (*rather awkwardly*). Yes, I suppose so.  
I mean I am.



NORBURY. Well, I never!

(NORBURY rushes and takes bag, which he places down L., then takes REGGIE'S coat and crosses up R. B. ROSALIE quickly puts tray down R. and returns.)

ROSALIE. Milady will be so 'appy. Milady does not expect Milord.

SIR REGINALD. Of course not. I mean—not yet.

ROSALIE. Ah, I understand. It's a so pleasant surprise for milady.

SIR REGINALD. That's it. (*Giving his hat to ROSALIE*) Perhaps you wouldn't mind telling her ladyship. (*Crosses down L. and round to top of piano, looking at room*)

ROSALIE (*delighted*). At once, M'sieu, at once!

(*Crosses up to NORBURY and gives him hat.*)

Well, what did I tell you, are you not surprised?

NORBURY (*coming down R.*). When one has lived in the best 'ouses of the British aristocracy, one is never surprised at anything.

(*Exit NORBURY R. ROSALIE runs out of c. window to L. window—she looks in—makes expression of great joy and rushes off.*)

SIR REGINALD (*after ROSALIE has gone*). The joy of the domestics at my patriarchial return is a little embarrassing under the circumstances. I feel like a prodigal calf—I mean son. (*Takes out time-table from pocket, takes out watch, puts it back during speech, then looks about him*) When is there a train back to Geneva? Oh! I've plenty of time. She's got a nice house here. She's got a very nice house here. How different from all those infernal hotels! It's a regular woman's room. It looks as if she actually had taste!

(*Enter TRAVERS R.*)

TRAVERS. Hullo

SIR REGINALD (*turning*). Jack!

TRAVERS. You? Whatever brought you here?

*(They cross c. and shake hands.)*

SIR REGINALD. I telegraphed to you from Geneva to Lincoln's Inn Fields this morning. Your clerk wired that you were here, and so I took the train and here I am—I want to speak to you.

*(They both sit on settee L.)*

TRAVERS. Nothing wrong, I hope?

SIR REGINALD. Only this: Helen and I have had enough of it.

TRAVERS. What?

SIR REGINALD. We can't stand it any longer. She and I. I and she. Always alone together—it's appalling.

TRAVERS. What, you're out of conceit with each other already?

SIR REGINALD. Nonsense! Helen adores me—we adore each other. But we find the time hang dreadfully on our hands.

TRAVERS. But how about the delights of travelling?

SIR REGINALD. Aha! *(With an ironical laugh)*

TRAVERS. Italy—

SIR REGINALD. Italy—ha—ha!

TRAVERS. The East?

SIR REGINALD. The East—oh—oh!

TRAVERS. Egypt!

SIR REGINALD. Now look here, old chap, if you mention Egypt to me I shall lose my temper.

TRAVERS. Whatever's the matter with you?

SIR REGINALD. What's the matter with me? This is the matter with me. For over a year I have led the life of a vagabond, of a personally conducted criminal, my eyes filled with the ashes of every steam engine in the world, my head ringing with the blast of every train whistle that was ever blown.

TRAVERS. But why don't you settle down somewhere?

SIR REGINALD. Settle down! No sooner did we try to settle down than the first hotel book reveals five or six people who might know us. Naturally we have to fly at once. My dear old chap, do you know that in Rome

alone, we passed through ten hotels, and ended up at the Grand International Hotel of United Italy?

TRAVERS. But that sounds rather frequented.

SIR REGINALD. It is—largely frequented—and not by human beings. We nearly died of it. And oh, my dear fellow, a woman on a journey! Helen on a journey! To begin with, she travels with sixteen trunks, and twenty-two small parcels, not counting her aunt Eliza. She always manages to leave one of them behind, without diminishing the quantity of our baggage. In every town she buys some little horror which necessitates another parcel. Then she is never punctual. She can't start in the morning because it is too early—she can't leave at night because it's too late, and her temper! And her jealousy. Jack! That woman's too fond of me.

TRAVERS. Surely you don't complain of that?

SIR REGINALD. Yes, I do—no, I don't. Anyhow, this morning I took a manly resolution. I left a line for Helen, telling her that I was going to find you, so as to make an end of it. (*Rises and crosses c.*)

TRAVERS. To make an end of it?

SIR REGINALD. Yes. It's quite impossible for us to go on seeing so much of each other. We must be married at once.

TRAVERS. You're still determined to marry Madame de Semlano?

SIR REGINALD. Of course. I am a man of honour, and I look upon Helen as my affianced wife.

TRAVERS. But aren't you afraid that when you're once married, things will still be worse?

SIR REGINALD. Certainly not. Once married, we shall get into society like everybody else. Once married, we shall see very little of each other. It'll be charming. (*Brings chair from piano and sits c.*) Now, the first thing to do is to arrange the divorce.

TRAVERS. Well, we'd better consult your wife on that subject.

SIR REGINALD. My what?

TRAVERS. Your wife.

SIR REGINALD. My wife?

TRAVERS. Yes, your wife.

SIR REGINALD. Oh yes, of course. I quite forgot.

TRAVERS (*rises and goes into verandah c.*). There she is!

SIR REGINALD (*rises, and crosses up, and looks out of verandah*). Where?

TRAVERS. There! Coming from the garden.

SIR REGINALD. What! That girl in the white dress?

TRAVERS. Yes.

SIR REGINALD. That girl in the white dress is my wife?

TRAVERS. Certainly.

SIR REGINALD. But she's very pretty.

TRAVERS. Certainly.

SIR REGINALD. And she's very smart.

TRAVERS. Certainly!

SIR REGINALD (*crossing in front of TRAVERS*). She's extremely attractive. (*Turns to him quickly*) Are you sure it's the same?

TRAVERS (*laughing*). I think so.

(ROSALIE *rushes in excitedly as the MEN come into the room.*)

ROSALIE (*to SIR REGINALD on their R.*) Milady comes directly, I haven't told her that it was Milord, so as not to spoil the surprise. (*Crosses to R. of R. c. table*)

TRAVERS (*aside to SIR REGINALD, who is going to speak to ROSALIE*). Be careful before the servants, remember that you're her husband.

(REGGIE *crosses and sits on settee with an air of ownership*. TRAVERS *crosses down c.* KITTY *enters, puts sunshade down R. c.* *Crosses down c., not seeing REGGIE, who has risen.*)

KITTY (*to TRAVERS*). Hullo!

(TRAVERS *backs a step and she sees REGINALD.*)

Oh! (*A pause*) You! Is it you?

SIR REGINALD (*much embarrassed—rubbing his hands*). Yes,—it's me—it's me.

TRAVERS (*trying to speak naturally*). Oh yes, it's him—  
—it's him.

ROSALIE (*joyfully, speaking across table*). After a long—long year. Ah! How happy milady must be, how joyful Milord must be. (*Goes and lights lamps up B., watching the others all the time. Then crosses to L. B. C. and lights lamp up C., and then crosses down L.*)

TRAVERS. Come, come, kiss each other. What do you think you look like?

SIR REGINALD (*embarrassed, but rather pleased*). Of course. (*To KITTY, timidly*) Aren't you going to kiss me?

TRAVERS (*aside, prompting him*). Darling!

SIR REGINALD (*who doesn't understand*). What?

TRAVERS (*aside*). Aren't you going to kiss me, darling?

SIR REGINALD (*quite confused*). Why should I kiss you?

TRAVERS. No! Her! Call her darling. (*Crosses to B. of KITTY*)

SIR REGINALD. Oh, of course. (*Briskly to KITTY*) Aren't you going to kiss me, darling?

TRAVERS (*aside to KITTY—over her shoulder*). Go on, kiss him.

KITTY (*very shyly*). All right—all right!

(TRAVERS crosses up, looks at ROSALIE. KITTY lifts her face, REGGIE just pecks her cheek—ROSALIE, who has been watching, gives vent to an expression of joyful "Oh!")

SIR REGINALD. Ten thousand pardons, it's on account of the maid.

KITTY. Of course, or I shouldn't allow such a thing—  
(REGGIE moves down a little—there is a pause—KITTY looks up and sees ROSALIE still looking at them clasping her hands in ecstasy.)

You can finish the lamps presently, Rosalie.

ROSALIE. I've finished now, Madame. (*She lights lamp on piano*)

KITTY. Very good, you can go.



(ROSALIE crosses to R. smiling joyfully as she goes—  
and Exits with tray of flowers, etc.)

In another moment I should have been kissed again.  
(To REGINALD) Won't you sit down, Sir Reginald, and  
tell me to what I owe the pleasure of your visit.

SIR REGINALD. Well—I—er—Jack will tell you all  
about it. (*Sits on settee*)

TRAVERS. Well, he's come to arrange for a divorce.  
In a very short time, you will cease to be Lady Belsize.

KITTY. Oh! What luck!

(NORBURY enters with knives, forks, napkin and glasses  
for REGGIE, on tray.)

I beg your pardon!

SIR REGINALD. Not at all. It's quite natural, I'm sure.

NORBURY (*laying for REGGIE R. end of table*). When  
shall I serve dinner, my lady? It's seven o'clock.

KITTY. In half an hour. (*Looking at REGGIE before  
speaking*) Lay another place, please.

NORBURY (*delighted*). I was just about to do so, my  
lady.

SIR REGINALD (*rising*). Am I asked to stay to dinner?

TRAVERS (*making him sit down again*). Are you asked  
to stay to dinner? Don't be a fool. You're in your own  
house.

SIR REGINALD. Of course—I forgot. (*Again takes at-  
titude of ownership*)

(*Exit NORBURY.*)

TRAVERS. Do remember the servants. Try and get  
into your head that you're married.

(KITTY pulls out chair L. of table and sits.)

Remember, if anybody found out our little plot, it might  
be very awkward for you.

SIR REGINALD. Why?

TRAVERS (*sitting L. of KITTY*). Why? Because if your  
cousin, Miss Hawsworth, had a chance, she'd be sure  
to try and upset the will.



SIR REGINALD. Good Heavens! I never thought of that.

TRAVERS. And you'd be rather annoyed, if after your divorce your decree wasn't made absolute.

SIR REGINALD. But who's going to stop our decree being made absolute?

TRAVERS. The King's Proctor.

KITTY. But who cares for the old King's Proctor? Who is going to tell him?

TRAVERS. Anyone. A curious neighbour, a discharged servant. Anyone who'd got nothing else to do, has only to write an anonymous letter to the King's Proctor——

KITTY. And the old gentleman interferes?

TRAVERS. Intervenes.

KITTY. It's the same thing. Is that the law?

TRAVERS. Certainly.

KITTY. Well, thank Heaven, we've got lawyers to protect us from it.

TRAVERS. That's what we're here for. Hush!

(ROSALIE enters, crosses to L. They all watch her—she picks up bag and crosses to bedroom door, smiling as she goes; their heads all turn and follow her, as she opens door, KITTY calls out:)

KITTY. What are you doing there? (To ROSALIE)

ROSALIE. I'm taking Sir Reginald's bag into Mi'ady's bedroom.

(ROSALIE exits quickly into room and shuts door.)

KITTY (rises and makes to stop her). Rosalie!

(TRAVERS rises and catches her arm—REGGIE rises smiling, crosses down L., picks up paper and pretends to read.)

TRAVERS. Hush! Do be careful.

KITTY. Well, I should like to know what you propose to do now? (Aside to TRAVERS) This is cheerful, I say, godfather; I hope he isn't going to stay long. When is there a train? (Turns up for time-table)

TRAVERS (checking her). A train! What are you

thinking of? He can't go away to-night. Whatever would the servants think? Remember the King's Proctor.

KITTY. But wherever shall we put him to sleep?

TRAVERS. Eh! Oh, anywhere.

(NOBURY enters with plates and soup on tray—which he puts on trestles R. ROSALIE enters from bedroom, crosses down and places C. chair at table again, then puts chair at writing-table for REGGIE.)

We'll arrange something, there's always the billiard table.

KITTY (laughing). Oh, poor dear!

NOBURY. Dinner is served, my lady! (Switches on table lights)

KITTY. Come, shall we sit down?

(ROSALIE puts 3 plates, which NOBURY handed to her, for KITTY.)

(Aside as she crosses) Two men to dinner, what fun!

(ROSALIE puts 3 plates for TRAVERS L.)

(Indicating his place to TRAVERS) Godfather!

(TRAVERS crosses to his chair and speaks under his breath to KITTY who is about to indicate his place to REGINALD.)

TRAVERS (aside). Reggie!

KITTY. Reggie—

(SIR REGINALD starts, she indicates his place. SIR REGINALD crosses to R. of table. ROSALIE, who has placed 3 plates draws over chair for him—they all three sit and spread out their serviettes.)

I warn you, you're only going to have quite a small dinner.

(NOBURY serves soup, which ROSALIE hands round—first to KITTY—second to TRAVERS.)

SIR REGINALD. Oh, people always say that.

(ROSALIE then coming below table back to NOBURY for third plate.)

KITTY. No, indeed. Croute au pot, salmon trout, filet de boeuf jardiniere, and fruit salad.

SIR REGINALD (*repeating it delightedly*). Croute au pot—salmon trout—filet of beef jardiniere—

TRAVERS (*imitating him*). And a fruit salad.

SIR REGINALD. It's all very well for you to chaff, but if you had been existing on hotel food for a year, you'd understand my joy at meeting a menu like this.

(ROSALIE has put soup in front of SIR REGINALD with great gladness, NORBURY exits with tray—followed by ROSALIE. SIR REGINALD takes out of his pocket a bottle of white powder and puts some into his glass.)

TRAVERS. What's that?

SIR REGINALD. Bi-carbonate of soda. For the last year I've been suffering from the most frightful indigestion—so has poor Helen.

KITTY. Really! You mean Madame de Semiano?

SIR REGINALD. My fiancée—yes.

TRAVERS. Hush! Hush!

(REGGIE looks round at door.)

Don't say those things here. Have you forgotten the King's Proctor—have you forgotten Clause—

SIR REGINALD and KITTY (*together*) "2. Or if on the 1st of September, the said Reginald Belsize—"

TRAVERS. Exactly! I want you to appear to be the most united couple. I want the servants to think that you're in love with each other

KITTY. That we're in love with each other?

TRAVERS. Yes; surely with a little effort of imagination—

SIR REGINALD (*looking at KITTY*). It requires scarcely any effort at all.

KITTY (*pleased*). Thank you.

TRAVERS. And if you can manage to throw in a few tender phrases.

(NORBURY enters with fish and champagne on tray, followed by ROSALIE.)

SIR REGINALD. I shan't have the smallest difficulty about that.

KITTY (*pleased*). Really!

NORBURY (*putting wine in cooler*). Pomery—'92.

(NORBURY *then removes plates (soup) and puts them on tray R.*)

SIR REGINALD. '92. Excellent!

(ROSALIE *then helps KITTY to fish, after NORBURY has removed soup plate.*)

TRAVERS (*pointing to fish*). Reggie, behold your trout.

SIR REGINALD. Reggie, behold your trout! Awfully good! (*Laughing and taking up champagne bottle and hiding his face from KITTY. Across table to TRAVERS*) I say, Jack, what's her Christian name?

TRAVERS. Kitty.

SIR REGINALD. Kitty! Pretty name—I don't think I've ever called anyone Kitty. (*Aloud*) Kitty? (*Puts back champagne*)

KITTY (*after a start*). Er—Reggie?

SIR REGINALD. Will you—pass me—the bread—please, darling?

KITTY. There it is, dear. (*Handing plate to him*)

SIR REGINALD (*takes a roll*). Thank you—my love.

(*They laugh, she replaces plate. REGINALD takes fish—KITTY watching him. BOTH servants having finished serving, stand behind table. There is a pause.*)

TRAVERS (*To KITTY*). Do you want anything?

KITTY. A glass of champagne, please.

(*BOTH SERVANTS and TRAVERS make a movement towards it.*)

SIR REGINALD. No! No! Allow me, dear. (*Taking up bottle*) Give me your glass! (*Filling it*) There—sweetheart.

KITTY. Thank you—sweetheart.

(*They look at each other, and burst out laughing.*)

(ROSALIE (*to NORBURY*). Aren't they dears?

(ROSALIE and NORBURY *exeunt together, taking tray.*)

SIR REGINALD (*helping TRAVERS and himself to champagne*). Well, how do you think I'm playing my part?

TRAVERS. Excellently well.

KITTY (*laughing*). What a hypocrite you must be.

SIR REGINALD. That's what Helen always tells me.

KITTY. Does she—reproach you often?

SIR REGINALD. Sometimes. But I know how to get round her. (*Conceitedly*)

KITTY (*Drily*). Really? (*Slight pause*) And how have you enjoyed your travels?

SIR REGINALD (*Furiously*). Oh, don't talk about it.

(KITTY *looks inquiringly at TRAVERS.*)

TRAVERS. Oh, they've had one or two little contre-temps.

KITTY. What! With such a charming companion as Madame de Semiano?

SIR REGINALD. Oh, yes—she's charming—charming—but she's not a very good traveller.

KITTY. Ah—not very practical?

SIR REGINALD. Not a bit.

KITTY. A little too smart, perhaps?

SIR REGINALD. Exactly.

KITTY. I should think she's not a woman to understand the comfort of a loose coat, and a short skirt on a journey.

SIR REGINALD. You see, as we were obliged to live incognito all the time, for fear people should talk, our only resource was to make excursions. You should see Helen on an excursion.

KITTY. I can fancy her, with a lace parasol.

SIR REGINALD. If you'd believe me, she actually made the ascent of the Righi with Louis XV heels. Naturally, she sprained her ankle.

KITTY. Ha! ha! (SIR REGINALD and TRAVERS *raise their heads quickly—she controls herself*) Poor woman!

(ROSALIE *enters, followed by NORBURY, with beef on tray.*)

SIR REGINALD. Yes, she's extremely tiresome.

(ROSALIE takes away three plates, NOBBURY takes beef round to KITTY.)

KITTY. You can put that down, we'll help ourselves.

(NOBBURY places beef in front of KITTY. ROSALIE and NOBBURY exeunt, taking plates, but leaving tray. KITTY serves beef, exchanging plates with SIR REGINALD.)

SIR REGINALD. Thank you, dear.

KITTY. Oh, you needn't trouble. (*Exchanging plate, with portion on it, with TRAVERS*) The servants are not in the room. But after all, you had other occupations, besides excursions. I am sure Madame de Semiano is very artistic, intelligent and cultivated.

SIR REGINALD (*with no conviction*). Yes—yes.

KITTY. It must have been charming visiting all those delightful spots in such romantic company.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, yes. I suppose it was.

KITTY. Italy—Florence.

SIR REGINALD. Ye—es.

TRAVERS. Naples—Rome.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, yes.

KITTY. And Venice—above all, Venice.

SIR REGINALD. No—not Venice. Madame de Semiano cannot live anywhere near water. She suffers from rheumatism.

KITTY. Ah, ah! (*SIR REGINALD and TRAVERS raise their heads quickly. Checking herself*) Poor woman!

SIR REGINALD. Yes, it's very tiresome.

KITTY (*stifling a laugh*). Aha! But in Rome?

TRAVERS. Oh! They stayed a long time in Rome.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, because of the Vatican.

KITTY. So as to see the frescoes, probably?

SIR REGINALD. No—to see the Pope.

KITTY (*looking at TRAVERS*). The Pope?

SIR REGINALD. Yes. Madame de Semiano is a very fervent Catholic. Her one idea was to have a private audience with the Pope. She wants to be made a Papal Marchesa. (*Enter ROSALIE and NOBBURY. ROSALIE takes away TRAVERS' and KITTY'S plates; NOBBURY takes away*



SIR REGINALD's *plate and the dish; then ROSALIE puts fruit salad on the table, and both exeunt with tray*) The Pope wouldn't hear of it. Helen was so disappointed, it's entirely upset her nerves. Ever since that, she's had as many as six hysterical fits in a week.

KITTY (*same business*). Oho! Aha! Poor woman!

SIR REGINALD. Women don't make good travelling companions.

KITTY (*rather angrily*). I beg your pardon!

(SIR REGINALD *hands table spoon to KITTY.*)

TRAVERS. Nonsense! You'd be just the same as any other woman. There are only two possible roles for women: the smart woman of the world, or the housewife.

KITTY (*-serving fruit salad*). Oh! Godfather! When will men cease talking about women with a capital "W." Woman with a capital "W" doesn't exist. (*Hands plate to SIR REGINALD, who exchanges his for it; she repeats business with TRAVERS*) There are hundreds of different kinds of women; not so many as women pretend, but a great many more than men dream of. Why, a woman can be anything and everything; a delightful companion and a sensible friend, or only a dear little thing. (*Takes up glass, and bows back*) She can talk the merest nonsense, and the profoundest sense; she can be as frivolous as a butterfly, and as affectionate as a dog (*puts glass down again*), and the stupidest woman can be a match for the cleverest man. While you are blundering about, misled by your eternal logic, a woman's instinct carries her straight to the point. Instinct teaches her when to laugh, and when to be sentimental; when to put her arms round your neck, and her head on your shoulder. Why, after all, it's only my instinct that tells me that you—that you—

SIR REGINALD. Yes?

KITTY. That you want some fruit salad. (*Helps SIR REGINALD to some. ROSALIE enters, followed by NORBURY, carrying coffee, liqueurs, cigarette case, and lamp on tray. She crosses L. c., prepares table. NORBURY*

*puts tray down and then replaces chair at piano; then both servants stand back*) And let me tell you that knowledge of a man's appetite is not the least important thing in life.

SIR REGINALD. What a dear—what a perfect dear.

KITTY (*taking up glass*). I'm quite thirsty after my long discourse. (*Drinks*)

TRAVERS (*holding up glass*). My dear Kitty, I drink to this happy occasion—the return of your husband.

SIR REGINALD (*rather embarrassed—holds up glass*). I drink—I drink—

KITTY (*almost seriously*). I drink to our—happiness. (*Clinks glasses with SIR REGINALD, and drinks—SIR REGINALD looks at her for a moment and then drinks*)

NORBURY (*after they have put glasses down*). The coffee is served, my lady.

(KITTY rises, the others follow. TRAVERS crosses to L. SIR REGINALD offers his right arm to KITTY; she takes it. NORBURY crosses down, takes off butler's tray-stand, then the champagne cooler.)

KITTY (*taking his arm*). Thank you, sir. (*They cross to L. S., laughing—KITTY goes to above coffee table—to the servants*) You can take away.

(ROSALIE puts SIR REGINALD'S chair against writing-table R., KITTY'S chair up R. C., and TRAVERS' chair up C., then comes L. of table. NORBURY, after turning lights off, comes to R. of table, and they take it off.)

TRAVERS (*to SIR REGINALD, holding out case*). Will you have a cigar?

SIR REGINALD (*to KITTY*). Oh! You allow smoking here?

KITTY (*taking a cigarette out of box on tray*). Of course. I smoke myself.

SIR REGINALD (*taking cigar*). I feel like a schoolboy in holiday time.

KITTY (*lighting her cigarette with lamp*). Doesn't Madame de Semiano smoke?

SIR REGINALD. Oh, I don't mind that; but she won't allow me to smoke.

TRAVERS. Kitty, I shall go and fetch my pipe.

(NORBURY enters, puts ottoman B. C., then places C. chair against it and exit.)

KITTY. Godfather! You've no shame.

(Exit TRAVERS. After TRAVERS has gone off, there is an embarrassing pause. SIR REGINALD twiddles his cigar, KITTY sees he has no light, and holds lamp up to him.)

SIR REGINALD (lighting his cigar). What a delightful woman you are. Everything in your house is charming. It's charming of you to smoke.

KITTY (pouring out coffee). Well, you see, there's always a moment after dinner, when the prettiest woman in the world has no chance against the attractions of a good cigar.

SIR REGINALD. You're as sharp as they make 'em.

KITTY (pours out brandy, holds it up to him). A glass of liqueur brandy? (Giving him glass)

SIR REGINALD (about to take glass—notices her hand). What pretty hands you've got. (Taking her hand in one of his, and the glass in the other) The prettiest hand I've ever—

KITTY (chaffing him). You needn't trouble, the servants have left the room.

SIR REGINALD. I assure you, it's no trouble at all. (Kissing her hand)

KITTY. Come, come! (Pulls her hand away, sits at piano, and mechanically plays a few notes)

SIR REGINALD (having drunk the liqueur). Do you play? (Puts glass down)

KITTY. Sometimes—when I'm bored.

SIR REGINALD. Do play me something now.

KITTY (looking up at him). But I'm not bored this evening.

SIR REGINALD. It's sweet of you to say that. (Coming to top of piano, looking at a song) What's that? Is that a song?

KITTY. Something I heard at a café chantant in Paris. Oh! I suppose I oughtn't to admit that I went to a café chantant?

SIR REGINALD. Why not? You're married.

KITTY. So I am—I forgot—I suppose I am—married.

SIR REGINALD. Do sing it.

(*She sings. As she does so, SIR REGINALD bends his face down near hers, then crosses behind her, and as she finishes, he kisses her on neck. KITTY looks up at him. SIR REGINALD'S face is very near hers—he suddenly kisses her.*)

KITTY (*jumping up*). Are you going out of your senses?

(*ROSALIE enters, after knocking, and stands L.*)

ROSALIE. A lady to see Madame.

KITTY. A lady?

ROSALIE. Madame de Semiano.

(*KITTY looks at SIR REGINALD and smiles.*)

SIR REGINALD. Damn! (*Moves down R. C.*)

KITTY. Madame de Semiano! Show her up at once—at once!

(*ROSALIE opens door. HELEN enters, sweeping past ROSALIE, stops L. C., and surveys KITTY. Then to SIR REGINALD.*)

HELEN. Ah, there you are! I knew it! I knew it!

SIR REGINALD (*aside*). Damn! (*He forms the word with his lips, without saying anything*)

KITTY (*takes a cigarette and lights it—with a very social manner*). How charming of you to come and see me, Madame de Semiano. Rosalie, that will do.

(*Exit ROSALIE L.*)

SIR REGINALD (*to HELEN, nervously*). Fancy your coming here, my dear. How on earth did you know—?

HELEN. You dropped the telegram from Mr. Travers' clerk. Am I in the way?

KITTY. Not at all, dear Madame de Semiano. (*Motions her to sit on settee*)

SIR REGINALD. Not at all.

KITTY (*still more sweetly*). May I offer you a cup of coffee, Madame?

(TRAVERS *strolls in from back, sees HELEN, and comes down nervously and quickly.*)

HELEN (*sharply*). Thank you—no. I think you were playing the piano when I came in, Miss Silverton.

KITTY. I beg your pardon—Lady Belsize.

HELEN. In name only. (*To SIR REGINALD*) You dined here alone with Miss Silverton?

KITTY (*sweetly*). Lady Belsize.

TRAVERS (*coming cheerily c.*). We all three dined here.

HELEN (*dismissing him*). You make no difference. I call it extremely improper. Why did you not bring me with you?

KITTY (*to SIR REGINALD*). Why ever didn't you?

HELEN. I should like some explan— Oh, what an atmosphere. (*Coughing*)

KITTY (*sweetly*). I am afraid my cigarette is disagreeable to you.

HELEN. No—it's Sir Reginald's odious cigar.

SIR REGINALD. Then you won't even allow me to smoke in other people's houses. (*Crosses up and throws cigar out of window*)

HELEN. Well, what is settled with regard to this divorce?

SIR REGINALD (*coming down R. C. again*). We were just going to discuss it.

HELEN (*advancing*). To music?

(TRAVERS *patting SIR REGINALD on the back, trying to smooth over the situation cheerfully.*)

TRAVERS. Well, we're all here. (*Crosses to piano and puts chair down C. by table. KITTY moves down R. a little. TRAVERS crosses L. and puts chair L. c.*) Let's sit down and discuss the matter.

SIR REGINALD (*sitting*). Very well.



(SIR REGINALD sits R. C., KITTY C., TRAVERS on settee, and HELEN L. C.)

HELEN. As quickly as possible, if you please.

TRAVERS (*looks at HELEN, then at the others*). First of all, there are the ordinary methods.

HELEN. Ah!

TRAVERS. Well, to begin with—cruelty.

HELEN (*rises*). Yes—yes.

SIR REGINALD (*rises*). No—no.

TRAVERS (*rises, motions them to sit; they all sit*). Very well. Well, suppose that Reggie deceives his wife?

HELEN. But that entails his deceiving me. Thank you—no!

TRAVERS. He need only pretend to deceive his wife.

HELEN. I object. I most strongly object. No, there's a simpler way than that.

TRAVERS. What is it?

HELEN. Instead of Lady Belsize divorcing Reggie—let Reggie divorce Lady Belsize.

KITTY. Never in this world. What do you take me for?

HELEN (*rises*). Oh, of course, if Miss Silverton has scruples—

KITTY (*rises*). It is absurd!

SIR REGINALD (*rises*). Of course it is. (*To HELEN*) Really, you're wanting in tact.

(*They all continue talking together.*)

HELEN. Oh, very well, very well! (*Pinched in manner*)

TRAVERS. Please, please, please! (*Puts SIR REGINALD down, and then HELEN*) Let's think of something else.

HELEN. A sister of my late husband's married a man in Peru, who went mad, and she got a divorce from him. Now, why shouldn't Reggie pretend to go mad? Then we can shut him up for a month or two—

SIR REGINALD. Thank you!

HELEN (*rises and advances*). You're the most selfish



person I ever met. You won't entertain any reasonable proposition.

SIR REGINALD (*rises and advances, too*). But it's not reasonable.

TRAVERS (*calming them down, rising and putting them down as before*). Madness is not ground for divorce in England.

HELEN. What a country—what a country! (*Sits*)

KITTY. I wonder you live in it.

TRAVERS. Hush, hush hush!

SIR REGINALD. Well, suggest something else. You're a solicitor.

OMNES. Yes—yes.

TRAVERS. If you were only Scotch, Kitty, like your husband.

KITTY. But I am, godfather; father was quite Scotch, in his youth; he grew out of it, but he started Scotch.

TRAVERS. Can you prove it?

KITTY. Absolutely!

TRAVERS. Then it's quite simple. To begin with, you absolutely refuse to live under the same roof with Reggle.

KITTY (*after a short pause*). Why should I do that?

HELEN (*rises*). What do you mean? Why should you do that?

TRAVERS (*to HELEN—rises and puts her down*). Please! (*To KITTY—sitting again*) Because you've taken an insurmountable dislike to your husband.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, that seems most unlikely.

TRAVERS. Good heavens! (*To KITTY*) What do you say?

KITTY. Well, I must say— (*Looking at SIR REGINALD*)

HELEN. I'm sure it appears quite likely to me.

TRAVERS (*to HELEN*). Of course, it's likely. Very often, after marriage, a woman finds out that the man she thought perfect is commonplace, unintelligent, bad-tempered—

SIR REGINALD. What?!

TRAVERS. Do be quiet! (*Going on*) The man who

seemed so charming in society—so gentle—so caressing, turns out to be stupid, selfish and incapable of winning a woman's heart.

SIR REGINALD (*rises*). But I'm not—on the contrary, I've always been most successful. (*Moving towards KITTY*) I'm told that I have what is called a way with me.

KITTY (*with interest, to SIR REGINALD*). Really!

HELEN (*rises*). I fail to see what business it is of yours, Miss Silverton. As for Sir Reginald's charm of manner—

SIR REGINALD. Well, I'm sure you've never made any complaint—

TRAVERS (*rises—puts both down again*). Will you allow me to speak? This is what has happened. (*Speaking to SIR REGINALD*) On the very day of your marriage, your wife found out the mistake she had made in placing her happiness in the hands of a man like you.

SIR REGINALD. I say—

TRAVERS. Pierced to the heart by her coldness, you left her that same afternoon. You remained abroad, hoping to efface from your mind the image of the woman you had adored. But even after a year's absence, you found it impossible.

SIR REGINALD (*looking at KITTY*). Go on, that sounds likely enough.

KITTY. Thank you.

HELEN. Are we here to talk business, or to hear you paying obvious compliments to Miss Silverton?

KITTY. Lady Belsize.

TRAVERS. You returned to-day—a thousand times more in love with your wife; absolutely resolved to commence a life of the sweetest companionship together.

SIR REGINALD. Absolutely resolved

HELEN. In theory—only.

TRAVERS (*to HELEN*). Of course. What is your disgust to find that your tête-a-tête is made impossible by inopportune visitors.

SIR REGINALD. Who are they?

KITTY. Madame de Semiano.

HELEN (*rises*). What?

TRAVERS (*rises*). And myself. We are the inopportune visitors.

HELEN. You're extremely polite.

TRAVERS. In theory only. (*Puts her down and sits*) Theoretically inopportune. At last we leave. Reggie accompanies us to the gate, and returns to find that Kitty, to avoid an interview with him, has retired to her room. (*Points to door. ALL look*) He beseeches her to see him for a few minutes. At last she consents to see him here. They are alone together.

HELEN (*rises*). Certainly not. Reggie returns with me to Geneva within half an hour.

TRAVERS (*rises*). Wait—wait a moment.

HELEN. I absolutely decline to leave my promised husband alone with mademoiselle.

KITTY. I'm sure I don't want to be left alone with Sir Reginald. Good gracious me, the idea of it!

HELEN. I wouldn't swear to that, Mademoiselle!

KITTY. Madame de Semiano! (*Rises*)

HELEN. Miss Silverton!

TRAVERS (*violently—crosses c.*). I give it up! I give it up! You're all one more impossible than the other. Good-bye; I throw up the case. (*Crosses up c.*) You've got yourself into a muddle, get yourself out of it. (*Crosses in veranda. KITTY follows, and tries to persuade him to come back*)

HELEN (*rising*). And Reggie remain tied to that lady? Mr. Travers, you can't be so cruel.

KITTY (*imploring him, as he walks backwards and forwards*). Godfather, please.

HELEN (*tapping SIR REGINALD on shoulder*). Why don't you add your entreaties? You don't seem at all anxious to bring this distasteful affair to a close.

SIR REGINALD (*rises*). Good gracious! I am, I am, I am! Travers, will you stay? There, will that satisfy you?

TRAVERS. Very well. I will, then; but on one condition.

SIR REGINALD. What is it?

TRAVERS. That you will let me say my say out. (*They all four silently seat themselves again*) Where were we?

KITTY (*looking up, after a pause*). Where I was left alone with—my husband.

HELEN (*makes an exclamation—rises*). With my promised husband.

TRAVERS (*puts her down*). Well, what naturally happens?

KITTY. Ah? (*Interrogatively*)

HELEN. Ah! (*Jealously*)

SIR REGINALD. Ah! (*Very interested*)

TRAVERS. You begin to make love to your wife.

SIR REGINALD. Desperate love.

HELEN. Love is sufficient.

KITTY (*to HELEN*). I quite agree with you. As little as possible.

SIR REGINALD. I'm prepared to go any length, for the success of our scheme.

TRAVERS. What do you meet with? Coldness—

HELEN. Extreme coldness.

KITTY. Oh, you can make yourself easy on that point, madame.

TRAVERS. At last, exasperated by the constant rebuffs which greet your tender words and entreaties—

SIR REGINALD. My extremely tender words and entreaties.

TRAVERS. You seize your wife in your arms, and attempt to imprint on her unwilling lips a long-deferred embrace.

HELEN (*rises*). I object—I strongly object. (*She is about to have a fit of hysterics. TRAVERS calms her*)

TRAVERS. Wait a moment. The touch of the man she once loved and now despises, rouses Kitty to a frenzy. All her disappointment, all her natural repulsion, surges to her heart, and she is unable to hide the loathing with which you have inspired her.

SIR REGINALD. I say! I say! You know, this is all very unlikely.

HELEN. Excellent! Excellent!

TRAVERS. You, Kitty, feel that you must finish it, once and for all. You run to the bell. (*Pointing to the bell-rope. All look at it*) And ring it violently—

HELEN. We rush in—

TRAVERS. I beg your pardon. You and I are at Geneva.

HELEN. But I will not budge an inch from this house.

TRAVERS. How on earth are you going to explain our presence here? The villa is very small; Kitty hasn't even got a spare room.

KITTY. One moment; there are two spare rooms in the pavilion at the end of the garden. I can have those got ready, as if you were going to be my guests for the night.

SIR REGINALD. Well, what happens then—after Kitty has rung the bell?

TRAVERS. We rush in, accompanied by the servants, and in the presence of everybody, Kitty declares that she will not live another day, another hour, another minute under the same roof with her husband. After a little argument, we persuade Reggie to accept this ultimatum as final, and we lead him away—

SIR REGINALD. Broken-hearted.

TRAVERS (*looks round for approval*). Well, what do you say?

SIR REGINALD (*quickly*). I accept.

KITTY. Well, if there's no other way—

SIR REGINALD. There is none. I'm sure.

KITTY. I accept.

TRAVERS. And you, Madame de Semlano?

HELEN. Why should all this really take place. Why not simply say it has?

TRAVERS. Because Reggie will have to tell the story in court; the servants will have to give their evidence. It's the only safe way.

HELEN. Well, I accept.

OMNES. Oh!



HELEN. On one condition.

TRAVERS. Ah!

HELEN. That I am present at the interview between Reggie and this lady.

SIR REGINALD. Good heavens!

KITTY. Really, Madame, I assure you, you may have the utmost confidence in me.

(SIR REGINALD crosses and talks to KITTY intently.)

TRAVERS (*rises, going to HELEN—aside*). I assure you, you can have confidence. Reggie adores you; you have only to look at him to see that. (*He turns, and sees SIR REGINALD gazing at KITTY, who is looking down. He gets quickly in front of HELEN, so that she shall not see SIR REGINALD, and signals to SIR REGINALD to stop*) I assure you he does.

HELEN. Very well, I will have confidence. But I shall stay in the next room.

TRAVERS. Well, if you must—you must.

HELEN. And the door must remain open.

SIR REGINALD. Come, come; that's not possible; it really is not possible.

HELEN (*rises*). Very well, then I decline.<sup>1</sup>

KITTY (*rises*). Really, Madame!

TRAVERS. One moment. The door shall be shut, but anyone in the next room can distinctly hear what is going on here. There! That disposes of all your objections.

HELEN (*with an effort*). Yes, I suppose it does.

TRAVERS. And now let us make haste—it's ten o'clock. We mustn't wait till the servants are in bed. (*Crosses up c. and shakes hands with KITTY*) Kitty, we will take our leave of you. You quite understand?

KITTY. Perfectly.

(TRAVERS crosses round behind piano and down L.)

HELEN. You are to be absolutely cold, absolutely indifferent.

KITTY. Absolutely!



TRAVERS. You are to be obstinate. (*Moves the chair he placed for HELEN back down L. again*)

KITTY. Firm as a rock. Good-bye, Madame de Sem-lano. (*SIR REGINALD has gone to door and opened it. KITTY bows to HELEN, who returns it stiffly*) This is going to be the most amusing evening I've had for four years. (*She goes out, bowing to SIR REGINALD, who holds open door as she does so. KITTY exits door up R.*)

TRAVERS (*at door*). Now, Madame, shall we go into the next room?

HELEN. One moment. (*She crosses to SIR REGINALD, who is taking a long look at KITTY, as he closes door. To SIR REGINALD*) Swear to me that you love me.

SIR REGINALD (*calming her*). What's the good? You won't believe me.

HELEN. Never mind; swear all the same.

SIR REGINALD. I swear it. There!

HELEN. Thank you. (*She crosses L. TRAVERS is at door*) Don't take long about this ridiculous affair.

(*Exeunt HELEN and TRAVERS.*)

SIR REGINALD (*who has come towards door L.*). I shall take just as long, or as short a time as I please. Helen's coming it a little too strong. Of course, she looks upon me as her husband, and, of course, I am going to be her husband. (*Rather sadly*) I am going to be her husband. (*Sits on settee, looking towards door*) Helen adores me; she's absolutely wild about me. Oh, I'm the last man in the world to blame her for that, poor thing. But she should have more confidence in my strength of character; she should have perfect confidence. In love, perfect confidence is the necessary—is the necessary—(*Rises, crosses up c.*) Besides, it's absurd to suppose that if I were going to make love to anyone, I should go and choose my wife. All the same, I shouldn't like Kitty to think I couldn't make love to her if I tried. (*The handle of the door by which HELEN has gone off rattles*) It's all right. (*HELEN enters excitedly—looks round room*) There, you see. I'm still alone.

HELEN. Swear to me—swear to me that you love me.

SIR REGINALD. Of course I do! Of course I do. There—there— *(In a calming tone)*

HELEN. My nerves are so upset! My nerves are so upset! I can scarcely answer for myself.

*(Exit HELEN, excitedly.)*

SIR REGINALD. Poor dear! *(Closing the door)* Her nerves, oh! In that case, perhaps I'd better lock— *(Is about to lock the door, then stops)* No, perhaps not. Helen's got terribly sharp ears. Now for it. *(Going towards door R. C., he stops)* I feel quite nervous. After all, it's my own wife. *(Pause)* My wife. She is my wife. *(He is going to knock at the door, when it opens, and KITTY enters. He almost knocks into her. KITTY stops, and laughs nervously)*

KITTY *(at door)*. Here I am!

SIR REGINALD *(pointing at her)*. There you are. *(He laughs awkwardly and shyly)* You do look nice.

KITTY *(rather shyly)*. Do I?

SIR REGINALD. I should rather say so.

*(KITTY crosses to table L. C. SIR REGINALD closes door and comes after her—laughs nervously.)*

SIR REGINALD. That gown becomes you awfully well.

KITTY. Do you think so?

SIR REGINALD. Rather. *(Pause)* Awfully well. *(Pause)* Rather! *(Pause)*

KITTY. You have got a flow of conversation. Are you always as chatty as this?

SIR REGINALD. I should like to say—

KITTY. What?

SIR REGINALD. Lots of things.

KITTY. Well, why don't you?

SIR REGINALD. I can't. You've cast a spell on me. *(KITTY looks at SIR REGINALD, then turns her face away)* You're so charming.

KITTY *(with downcast eyes)*. Really? *(A pause)*

SIR REGINALD. You do look nice.

KITTY (*half shyly, half roguishly*). You said that before.

SIR REGINALD. It's true. D'you know, I could stay here and look at you for hours and hours.

KITTY. Wouldn't Madame de Semiano get a little tired of waiting for you in the next room?

SIR REGINALD. I shouldn't mind that much. By Jove! You do look nice.

(*She crosses and sits on settee. He looks at her and sighs. Pause.*)

KITTY. You know, if you don't get on quicker, this interview is likely to last some time.

SIR REGINALD. I don't care how long it lasts. (*Laughs stupidly*) It's awfully funny, but I don't know what to say to you.

KITTY. The situation's very simple; you're married to a wife—

SIR REGINALD. Yes.

KITTY. A nice little woman, in her way.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, yes.

KITTY. Rather intelligent.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, yes.

KITTY. Shall we say, attractive?

SIR REGINALD. Yes, very attractive.

KITTY. But she's never allowed you to make love to her for a moment.

SIR REGINALD. I know she hasn't—worse luck!

KITTY. Well, after a year's separation, you come back to your little wife—

SIR REGINALD. Well—? (*Hanging on her words*)

KITTY. What do you want to say to her?

SIR REGINALD. I—I daren't tell you. (*KITTY turns her head away shyly*) I'm awkward and shy. Do you know why I am awkward and shy? Because I'm overcome, because I'm really overcome.

KITTY. What?

SIR REGINALD. Yes. Ever since I came to see you this afternoon, ever since I kissed your cheek, and you

kissed me; since you called me sweetheart; since the maid put my bag in your room, I'm more than overcome, I'm off my head.

*(Band outside heard playing the song she has just sung.)*

KITTY. Bravo! Very good indeed!

SIR REGINALD. What?

KITTY. I said, very good indeed. You're doing it very well.

SIR REGINALD *(kneeling on sofa)*. It's all very well to say we're pretending, but we're not. After all, I'm your husband and you're my wife. Kitty, this comedy that we're playing is real—real—real!

KITTY. That's right—very good!

SIR REGINALD *(getting closer)*. Since I've seen you—the real you—because I have never seen the real you until to-day—I'm dazzled. I didn't know that I'd a little wife of my own—you dear little woman—we might have been so happy together. *(Sitting, taking her hand and kissing it)* Oh, your little hand! Your little hand!

KITTY. You really do—make—love—very nicely.

SIR REGINALD. I love you, Kitty! I love you! *(He tries to kiss her; she leans away from him; he clasps her in his arms)*

KITTY. No! No! I forbid you! I forbid you! *(He does kiss her, she stops struggling; she frees herself and tries to resist him, but he gradually draws her to him)* If you imagine for one moment that I'm not angry—you're wrong. I'm very angry. *(Then her voice dies away)* Very—very—angry! *(Her head falls on his shoulder. He kisses her again)*

SIR REGINALD. I love you! I love you!

*(HELEN heard outside.)*

HELEN. I tell you, I will come in.

*(They both start up.)*

KITTY. Listen!

TRAVERS *(heard off)*. No, my dear lady, I beg of you.

HELEN (*off*). Mr. Travers, let me pass. I tell you I will.

KITTY (*points to the bell rope*). There! Ah, the bell, the signal!

(*She makes as if to run to the bell. SIR REGINALD bars the way. She tries to dodge him twice, then quickly turns and runs round the ottoman to door R. C., and exit. SIR REGINALD runs after her, but stands for a moment irresolute at ottoman.*)

HELEN (*off*). I tell you I will come in. (SIR REGINALD rushes into room up B. after KITTY and shuts and locks door. The door down L. bursts open, and HELEN rushes on frantically, followed by TRAVERS trying to restrain her. Looking round her) Gone! Where are— (Looking at door B. C., with a cry) Ah! (*She runs to the door and shakes it violently*)

TRAVERS. Dear lady! Dear lady!

HELEN (*with a yell of fury*). Locked! Locked! They are in there, alone together! Oh, I'm choking—I— (*She goes into a violent attack of hysterics, and falls on chair L. C. TRAVERS attending to her, and fanning her with a paper*)

TRAVERS. Dear lady! Dear lady!

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

SCENE:—*Same as Act II. The blinds are down when the curtain rises, and the room is only half lit.*

(TRAVERS enters R.)

TRAVERS (*calls*). Reggie! Reggie! (*Crosses up back c. towards door R., calls softly*) Reggie! (*Then he pulls up the blinds. The day is seen breaking—opens window—crosses to balcony, calls*) Reggie! Reggie! (*Comes and sits in chair R. c.*) What a night! My goodness, what a night. (*Rises*) Where on earth has he got to? (*Crosses to door L., opens it and calls*) Reggie! Reggie!

(*Enter BELSIZE from balcony L. U. E. and L. c., collar turned up, his hair dishevelled, shivering. He sneezes, then blows his nose. TRAVERS then turns and sees him.*)

Ah! So you're there, are you? I've been hunting for you high and low. Where have you come from?

SIR REGINALD (*coming down c.*). From the garden.

TRAVERS (*below settee L.*). What?

SIR REGINALD. Yes; I've been spending the night in the garden. I think I've caught cold. (*Trying to sneeze.*)

(TRAVERS *crosses, turns him round, looks at him, throws up his arms, crosses and sits on settee.*)

TRAVERS. Well, you've got us all into a nice mess.

SIR REGINALD. Poor dear Helen! I suppose you've had an awful time with her.

TRAVERS. An awful time! I couldn't have believed it possible for any woman to have five separate and distinct attacks of hysterics on one night. But Madame de Semiano did.

SIR REGINALD (*méekly, in a frightened tone, sits on ottoman*). Dear! dear! dear! (*Sneezes*)



TRAVERS. She boxed my ears, and scratched Norbury's face.

SIR REGINALD. Really! I am sorry for Norbury, she's a powerful woman.

TRAVERS. Then she threatened to take her own life.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, she often does that.

TRAVERS. So Norbury had to go and fetch the doctor, and at last, after her fifth attack of hysterics, we got her to take a sleeping draught, put her to bed in the pavillion in the garden, (*pointing*) where I pray she will sleep some time.

SIR REGINALD. I sincerely hope she will.

TRAVERS. Oh, my dear old chap! However could you! However could you?

SIR REGINALD. It's all your fault.

TRAVERS. *My* fault?

SIR REGINALD. You. (*Rises and crosses to table L. c.*) You leave me alone with a charming woman—a very charming woman—I say, Jack, she is charming, isn't she?

TRAVERS. Yes. (*Pause*) Go on?

SIR REGINALD. Who is also my wife. I suppose you won't deny that.

TRAVERS. No. (*Pause*) Go on.

SIR REGINALD. Well, a man owes his wife some consideration. Then—then Helen started banging at the door. Kitty insisted on my leaving her. I vowed eternal fidelity—through the keyhole but all in vain. Then, after twenty minutes at the keyhole I was suddenly seized with agonies of remorse.

TRAVERS. Remorse! (*Laughs, rises and crosses L. c.*)

SIR REGINALD. Yes, remorse. I realized the baseness of my conduct, yes, I did. I am that sort of chap. (*Crosses and sits on settee*) I always realize the baseness of my conduct about an hour afterwards. I remembered that I had behaved vilely to poor Helen, poor dear Helen—and I went as far as the pavillion in the garden, but when I got to the door, I heard screams, cries—I knew at once that Helen was in hysterics.

TRAVERS. And pray why didn't you come in?

SIR REGINALD. When Helen's in hysterics, there's only one thing to be done—to run away. I ran away. When I came back all was quiet. I tried to get into the house, but everything was locked up, so I spent the night in the garden. (*Tries to sneeze*) I know I'm going to have a heavy cold. (*Lies down with head on cushion*) Oh, dear!

(*Pause. TRAVERS stares at him in disgust. SIR REGINALD looks up and sees him staring.*)

Oh! don't look at me like that. (*Pause*) I suppose you think I've behaved badly.

TRAVERS. Abominably!

SIR REGINALD. Oh! (*Buries his face in the cushion*)

TRAVERS (*sniffs—going R.*). And now what do you propose to do?

SIR REGINALD. It's an awful situation. I've promised my wife that I'll give up the woman I'm engaged to be married to, and I've sworn to my fiancée that the woman I've married shall never be my wife. What a position for me. And when I think that I've promised to one of them, what I owe to the other, what one has every right to expect of me, what the other probably does expect of me, I feel like a moral bigamist. (*Sneezes, rises crosses up C.*) Oh, why was I born such a conscientious man!

TRAVERS. Conscientious! Ha! ha! ha! (*Goes on to verandah and back to C.*)

SIR REGINALD (*moving up too*). It's all very well to laugh, but there's no solution to the difficulty. (*Comes down R. C.*) Even good old Solomon wouldn't stand.

TRAVERS (*coming to him*). I can tell you who'll solve the difficulty—Kitty. She's very intelligent, she probably realises what your protestations are worth, and that you're incapable of knowing your own mind for two minutes, and at this moment she's furious with herself, and with you.

SIR REGINALD. With herself, perhaps, somehow I don't think she's altogether furious with me.

TRAVERS (*tapping him on chest*). You've behaved vilely to Kitty.

SIR REGINALD (*tapping back*). Yes; but not so badly as I've behaved to Helen. Think the way that poor woman's been risking her own reputation and her aunt Eliza's health (*crosses to window*) flying round Europe for a year at my heels.

TRAVERS. Then you still feel that you are bound to Helen for life?

SIR REGINALD. Yes. (*Crosses up B. C.*) That's just the terrible part of it.

TRAVERS. What?

SIR REGINALD. Yes; on account of Kitty. (*Crosses to door B. C. and leans against it*)

(TRAVERS goes into verandah.)

Think of the way I've compromised Kitty, poor dear little Kitty.

TRAVERS (*at the window*). One moment.

SIR REGINALD. What

TRAVERS. I thought I saw something moving in Madame de Semiano's window.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, don't say that. (*Evinces signs of fright*)

TRAVERS. No, I was mistaken. (*Comes into room again*)

SIR REGINALD (*crosses to L. C.*). Ah, poor dear sweet soul!

TRAVERS. Hush! (*Runs to door and listens*)

SIR REGINALD (*again starting and looking round*). What is it?

TRAVERS. I thought I heard something moving in Kitty's room.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, don't say that. (*Same BUS.*)

TRAVERS. No, she's still asleep.

SIR REGINALD. Ah, poor little darling! (*Sits on settee*)

TRAVERS. No, I was right.

SIR REGINALD. Don't keep on doing that. (*Rises*)

TRAVERS. I can hear her walking about.

SIR REGINALD. Good heavens, I'm off!

(TRAVERS crosses and tries to keep him. They move to B. struggling to get free.)

Talk to Kitty, explain to her that I'm ready to do anything she wishes. But Helen will take me with her, I know she will. Explain it to her as best you can—talk to her.

(Releases himself and Exits, slamming door in TRAVERS' face.)

TRAVERS. Talk to Kitty indeed! That's a nice easy task. Poor little thing! I know, I shall have floods of tears and all the rest of it. (Crosses and knocks at door) Kitty! my poor child, Kitty!

KITTY. Who's there?

TRAVERS (in a consoling voice as if speaking to a child). It's only I, my dear, I, your godfather, who's ready to take you in his arms and dry your tears.

(Enter KITTY humming a tune, very collected and mistress of herself. She looks round, crosses into verandah, and returns into room.)

TRAVERS (astonished). Eh!

KITTY. Where is he?

TRAVERS. Belsize? Your—

KITTY. My husband—yes.

TRAVERS. He's gone to tidy himself a little. He spent the night in the garden.

KITTY (quickly). Oh, I hope he didn't catch cold.

(TRAVERS consolingly takes her and puts her down on ottoman, crosses to piano, brings chair down and sits close to her on her L.)

TRAVERS. I'm so sorry for you, my dear. Now come and sit down. I've seen Reggie, and he admits he's behaved like a heartless scoundrel.

KITTY. Eh?

TRAVERS. And he's willing to do anything that may in any way calm your just anger.

KITTY. But I'm not angry with him.

TRAVERS. He has sufficient remnants of good feeling left to spare you the pain of an interview, and he will leave this place to-day.

KITTY (*in an altered tone, rises and puts her hands on TRAVERS' shoulders*). Leave this place? He's going away?

TRAVERS. Yes; you see, after all, he has a good heart. There will be no necessity for you to see Madame Semiano. They will go away together, as quickly as possible.

KITTY (*Crosses to L. and back to c.*) But I don't want them to go away together. He shan't go away, godfather, he shan't.

TRAVERS (*turning to her*). Good heavens! Why not?

KITTY. Because he's not in a state to travel.

TRAVERS. What do you mean?

KITTY. D'you mean to tell me that you've not remarked how ill he looks—how nervous and thin?

TRAVERS. No; I can't say I have.

KITTY. I assure you it made my heart bleed to look at him, godfather. You're quite right, Madame de Semiano doesn't care that for him—everything proves it.

TRAVERS. Oh, I don't know about that.

KITTY. If he'd been travelling with me, d'you think he'd have found his voyage insupportable? If I'd been with him, would he have been in the state of mind he's in now? Would he have taken bi-carbonate of soda with his meals, and would he never have seen Venice? Poor man! Do I suffer from Rheumatism? Am I in the habit of spraining my ankle? Do I make perpetual scenes? Am I mad about the Pope? (*Crosses and sits on settee*) Good heavens! what a woman she must be! The idea of dragging the man you're in love with, all over Europe with you, as if he were a steamer trunk, it's scandalous!

TRAVERS (*drags chair over and sits near table L. c.*). I think you're going rather far.

(KITTY turns on him quickly—he backs chair in surprise.)



KITTY. You think so, do you? Good heavens, if I'm not there to look after him, and nurse him, and take proper care of him (*Turning again quickly and bangs table*) that poor man'll be a chronic invalid. And do you imagine, that, knowing all this, I'm going to let him go away with that harpy? Never in this world. (*Rises, crosses up c.*)

(*As she passes TRAVERS catches hold of her, she throws him off and goes into verandah.*)

I should consider it a gross breach of my duty.

TRAVERS. Kitty! (*Turns and looks at her*)

KITTY (*coming down again*). And then if he goes away, what's to become of me? Am I to go on leading a miserable lonely life—

TRAVERS. But it's the life you've led for the last year.

KITTY. Perhaps! But it isn't the life I've led since yesterday morning.

TRAVERS. My dear child, you'll have to make up your mind to that.

KITTY. Do you suppose for one moment I'm going to allow him to marry that Peruvian person.

TRAVERS. Why not?

KITTY (*pause*). Why not? (*Crosses and sits on ottoman—slow movement,—becoming serious*) Because—because I love him, godfather.

TRAVERS (*rises, crosses close behind her*). You love Belsize?

KITTY. Yes, I love my husband. (*Repeating softly to herself*) My husband—my husband!

TRAVERS. I'm quite dumbfounded!

KITTY. The first time I saw him I thought he seemed a dear nice silly thing, and then on my wedding day, I was so humiliated that he never even looked at me, and afterwards—all the long time I lived here alone, I used to think and think and always about Reggie. And then he came—and— (*Takes TRAVERS' hand in both hers*) Oh, godfather, don't laugh at me. I'm not smart, and she's magnificent. She's beautiful, and my nose never



was right. I'm only a poor foolish little woman, but he's my husband, and I love him, I love him, I love him!  
(*Breaks down and cries*)

TRAVERS (*leans over and pats her on the back re-assuringly*). Hush, my dear, hush! After all if you've made up your mind to be his wife, you can always decline to divorce him.

KITTY (*through her tears*). But that wouldn't stop him going away.

TRAVERS. Ah, I don't know how you're going to stop that.

KITTY (*raising her head*). He's made up his mind that it's his duty to go away, hasn't he?

TRAVERS. Yes.

KITTY. Very well. Since he's made up his mind to go—let him go. (*Rises and crosses up c.*)

TRAVERS (*getting above her and on her r.*). What are you going to do?

KITTY. Never mind, godfather. I've thought of a way—a woman's way. (*Going towards her room*)

TRAVERS (*moves up also*). Where are you going?

KITTY (*with an air of defiance*). Going! To put on my new mousseline de sole.

(*Exit KITTY.*)

TRAVERS. You little dear! She's quite capable of getting her own way. Hang me if I don't help her. (*Then struck with an idea*) And Captain Churchill shall help me. (*Sits up B. C. thinking*)

(*SIR REGINALD puts his head through doorway.*)

SIR REGINALD. Whist! Whist!

(*TRAVERS looks up.*)

Have you seen her?

TRAVERS. Yes.

SIR REGINALD (*closes door—crosses L. C.*) What did she say?

TRAVERS (*rises, comes c.*) First of all, let me ask you

a question. What have you definitely made up your mind to do?

HELEN (*outside*). Thank you, I can find him for myself.

SIR REGINALD. Psst! Helen!

TRAVERS. I'll leave you together. (*Crosses up back*)

SIR REGINALD (*catching hold of him*). For Heaven's sake don't. Stay here. (*Puts him by table L. c. and gets by ottoman R.*)

(*Enter HELEN in a violent passion.*)

HELEN (*crosses to c.*). Ah! at last!

TRAVERS (*standing behind chair L. c.*). Ah! I hope you're feeling better this morning, Madame de Semiano?

HELEN (*to SIR REGINALD, crosses to R.*). Ah! you're there, are you?

SIR REGINALD (*getting round ottoman*). Yes, dear.

HELEN (*following*). You brute!

SIR REGINALD. My dear—

HELEN. You—brute! (*Crosses and pushes TRAVERS in front of him and gets below settee*)

SIR REGINALD (*aside to TRAVERS*). Say something to her.

TRAVERS. My dear Madame de Semiano—

HELEN (*pushing TRAVERS away down L.*) Don't you interfere. (*To SIR REGINALD*) You dishonourable wretch—when I think of the way you've treated me—I, who have sacrificed everything for you, my health, my reputation, my peace of mind, and all for that minx—that cat—that—that—that cat!

TRAVERS (*coming above ottoman—points*). Take care, she's in there.

HELEN. Oh, is she? So much the better. (*Crosses towards her*) I'll let her know what I think of her. (*Going to KITTY'S door*)

SIR REGINALD. Oh, you—you wouldn't do that?

HELEN. Wouldn't I? You'll see.

TRAVERS (*gets above her*). Don't be foolish—you've got to conciliate Kitty.

HELEN (*to TRAVERS, coming down c.*). I—I've got to conciliate that—creature?

TRAVERS (*following*). Well, you still need her help.

SIR REGINALD (*mildly*). Of course.

HELEN (*turning on him*). Scoundrel! (*to TRAVERS*) I have need of that creature's help?

TRAVERS. Yes—unless you want to lose Reggie's money. I mean unless you want Reggie to lose his money.

SIR REGINALD (*mildly*). Of course!

HELEN (*to SIR REGINALD*). Murderer!

TRAVERS. If Kitty likes, she can give away our entire scheme.

SIR REGINALD. Yes.

HELEN. Serpent! Serpent! Serpent!

SIR REGINALD. But I—

HELEN (*to SIR REGINALD*). Hold your tongue! (*To TRAVERS*) Then we're in this woman's hands. Oh! Oh! Oh!

*(She sits in chair L. showing signs of hysterics, both men trying to calm her.)*

TRAVERS. Be calm! Be calm!

SIR REGINALD. Helen! (*Shouting*) Don't do that!

TRAVERS. We don't think that Kitty will turn nasty, and even if she threatens to now, perhaps later on, in a year or two—

HELEN (*rises*). In a year or two?

TRAVERS. After all, what is a year or two? You can always start again on your travels.

HELEN (*crosses up c.*). On our travels? (*Furious*)

SIR REGINALD (*overcome with horror*). On our travels? (*Sits on settee*)

TRAVERS (*insiduously, following her up and down*). There are a great many most interesting places you haven't seen yet. Japan—China—India—or America. If you want a divorce in a hurry you can always go there.

SIR REGINALD (*rises and comes towards her*). I suppose we could— (*Weakly*)

HELEN (*to TRAVERS*). America! (*Moves towards SIR REGINALD*)

(*He gets behind settee.*)

You want to send me to America? (*To SIR REGINALD*) You've made me spend a whole year in a railway train. And now you want me to spend another on board ship. And you know, you heartless brute, I'm a wretched sailor. (*Sits leaning over back of settee*)

SIR REGINALD (*weakly and miserably*). After all, we should be together, dear, that's something.

HELEN. Oh—h! What I've given up for you? (*Rises and crosses c.*) When I think of poor Robert Churchill—Robert wouldn't have behaved like this—Robert would have had too much tact. Bob really loved me.

TRAVERS (*close to her r.*). And still does.

HELEN (*quickly to SIR REGINALD*). And still does? *To TRAVERS*) How do you know that?

TRAVERS. I met him in town the other day, and he asked me for your address.

HELEN (*crosses to above table*). Aha! You hear! Robert's been asking for my address. Robert loved me—loved me! (*Comes and sits on chair l. c.*) Poor dear Robert adores me!

SIR REGINALD (*coming below settee l.*). He was perfectly delighted when you threw him over.

TRAVERS. He thoroughly realizes what a treasure he has lost.

SIR REGINALD. It's taken him nearly a year to find it out!

HELEN. Oh! how I have wronged him! Dear Robert!

SIR REGINALD. Good heavens! If you think so much of him, why don't you go back and marry him.

HELEN. Ah! more unlikely things have happened.

SIR REGINALD. Ah! but you can't!

HELEN. Can't I?

SIR REGINALD. No, you can't. You threw him over. You're engaged to me.

TRAVERS. No one knows that. If Madame de Semiano

were to re-engage herself to Captain Churchill it would only be a nine days' wonder.

HELEN. Exactly.

TRAVERS. Let us be above all just. Captain Churchill is a nice man.

HELEN. Extremely nice man.

TRAVERS. He's a fine man.

HELEN. He's a magnificent man!

TRAVERS. Lots of people consider him a very clever man.

HELEN. He's a brilliant man.

TRAVERS (*aside*). This is all right. (*Aloud*) And you know how much his fortune has improved.

HELEN. You hear? He's a millionaire. (*To TRAVERS*) How do you know that?

TRAVERS. He told me so himself.

HELEN (*rises, crosses to below settee—to SIR REGINALD*) You're not the only man in the world, you know.

TRAVERS. He's a brilliant financier. Who knows? He may become Chancellor of the Exchequer one day.

HELEN. Robert has everything to command success.

SIR REGINALD. Then why did you throw him over.

TRAVERS. A woman's caprice.

SIR REGINALD (*crosses to TRAVERS c.*). Look here, Travers, you're beginning to get on my nerves. After all, you're responsible for all this trouble. (*Crosses down below ottoman*)

TRAVERS (*coming c.*). I?

SIR REGINALD. Didn't you insist on leaving me alone with Kitty! There was a silly thing to do!

HELEN (*has come between SIR REGINALD and TRAVERS*). That's quite true!

TRAVERS (*backing to L. followed by the others*). Really! Really!

SIR REGINALD. Do you imagine I ever had an idea of making love to Kitty before that? No! She was absolutely indifferent to me. You threw her into my arms.

HELEN. True again! Quite true! And if you'd al-

lowed me to break down the door last night, all this wouldn't have happened.

SIR REGINALD. Of course not. If you'd have let her break the door down how could I have made love—I mean I shouldn't have made love to Kitty.

TRAVERS. Really—

HELEN. I've no doubt you meant well, but before you advise people again, I should try to learn a little tact.

TRAVERS. Really, Madame—

SIR REGINALD. You'd better hold your tongue.

TRAVERS. Look here! I've had about enough of this. Settle it yourselves.

*(Exit, R., slamming the door.)*

*(At TRAVERS' Exit, HELEN stands with her back to SIR REGINALD—he tries to put on a bold front, looking to see if HELEN is noticing him.)*

SIR REGINALD. Aha! I'm not at all sorry.

*(She turns her head—he backs nervously.)*

I told him what you really think about him, all this is entirely his fault. You see, my dear Helen— *(Quails under her fixed gaze)*

HELEN *(coming quickly towards him)*. Well? Well? Well?

SIR REGINALD. Now you see, he hasn't been gone two minutes, and you've quite forgiven me. *(Tries to take her hand)*

*(She crosses to c. and stands with her back to him.)*

I can see it in your eye. Helen, speak to me. Oh, do say something to me.

*(She turns her head and glares at him.)*

Don't look at me like that. That's the look I cannot bear. Say something—anything.

*(She comes towards him—he backs up.)*

HELEN. We leave this place at once.

SIR REGINALD. Certainly. But promise me you'll say,



something to me on the road. Just to make the journey pass.

HELEN. Go and pack your bag.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, dear.

HELEN. I'll go and order a cab to take you to the station.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, dear.

HELEN. The train starts in an hour.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, dear.

HELEN. You've just time to arrange everything with that woman.

SIR REGINALD. Yes, dear.

HELEN. Offer her money—she'll do anything for money. (*Crosses to door L.*)

SIR REGINALD (*following her*). Very well. Helen—you are not going like that, are you? Aren't you going to kiss me, darling?

HELEN. Very well, make haste.

(*He kisses her timidly on the cheek and turns aside. She makes a gesture of rage and Exits L.*)

SIR REGINALD. Ah! (*Sits R.*) After all it might have gone off worse. Now for my bag. Good heavens! (*Rises*) My bag's in Kitty's room. Poor dear little thing, I hope she won't be very unhappy. Well, I must get my bag—here goes! (*Knocks at door*)

KITTY (*off*). Who's there?

SIR REGINALD. It's I—Reginald!

KITTY. I'll be ready in a moment.

SIR REGINALD. Ready in a moment? Does she expect me then? Pray Heaven she's not going to cry and make me a scene like Helen.

(*Enter KITTY, very calm, almost cheerful, her hat on her head—wearing a travelling cloak and gloves and carrying a bag, keys in basket and a lease.*)

KITTY. I'm so sorry I made you wait. (*Closes door.*)

SIR REGINALD. Made me wait!

KITTY (*comes to above ottoman*). But I had to give

some final orders to the servants. Now everything is ready. (*Puts bag on ottoman*)

SIR REGINALD. Everything is ready?

KITTY. Come, come, let's get to business.

SIR REGINALD. Business?

KITTY. We must be quick about it. (*Looks at clock*) I've only got half an hour. First of all, here are the keys.

SIR REGINALD. The keys?

KITTY. Yes. (*Holds it up*) The big one—this one—is the key of the cellar. (*Puts it in his left hand*) This is the key of the garden gate, but the gardener generally shuts that. (*Repeats BUS.*) This is the key of the little store-cupboard with the red knob. You have to turn it sharply and then bang on the right hand door with your fist. (*Repeat BUS.*)

SIR REGINALD. You have to bang—

KITTY. This little one is the latchkey of the house—it's a Yale lock—you have to put it in upside down. (*BUS. of turning key*)

SIR REGINALD (*not understanding*). Oh, you have to put it in upside down. (*Repeats BUS.*)

(KITTY takes the keys out of his hand, replaces them in basket and places latter in his hand.)

KITTY. The other keys are in the doors. Here is the lease of the villa—it's in your name. (*Puts lease into his hand also*) I've not had time to take away all my belongings, but Rosalie knows what to send on to me. Oh, by the bye, the best room has just been done up, but I—I shouldn't advise Madame de Semiano to take it—it's rather near the lake, and it's a little damp. I thought I'd just tell you about it, because I fancy you said Madame de Semiano is rheumatic. (*Slight sniff*)

SIR REGINALD (*sniffs too*). Would you mind telling me what you are talking about?

KITTY (*looking round room*). There, that's all—I've forgotten nothing. The keys—the lease— (*Picks up bag*) and now good-bye. (*Putting out her hand*).

SIR REGINALD. What do you mean by "good-bye?"

KITTY. I couldn't remain another moment in this house.

SIR REGINALD. Not remain in your own house?

KITTY. It is not my house. I couldn't accept it.

SIR REGINALD. But you did accept it.

KITTY. On the understanding that you are I were to be absolute strangers. But you and I are no longer strangers.

SIR REGINALD. But that is my fault—I made love to you!

KITTY (*throwing up her eyes*). Ah! I shall never forget that.

SIR REGINALD. Kitty—

KITTY. Not another word. (*Crosses to above table L. C.*) I can accept nothing at your hands.

SIR REGINALD (*putting keys and lease on table*). But the money I settled on you?

KITTY. I shall never touch a penny of it.

(SIR REGINALD *takes hold of bag.*)

(*Trying to take it*) Please give me my bag.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, Kitty, Kitty! You're making me very unhappy. I should so like to do something for you.

KITTY. Hush! think only of Madame de Semiano.

SIR REGINALD. Madame de Semiano is quite capable of thinking of herself.

KITTY. Poor woman! That's only natural. Think of the mental agony she is suffering.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, you think she is suffering—?

KITTY. Yes; last night she had four distinct attacks of hysterics.

SIR REGINALD. Five!

KITTY. Five! Who knows she may have another one within an hour.

SIR REGINALD. It's more than likely.

KITTY. And you propose to start now? Whatever would you do if she had hysterics in the train?

SIR REGINALD (*leaning on chair, having bag in R.*)

*hand*). That's already happened once. She had a very bad attack of hysterics when we were going through the St. Gothard. She rang the alarm bell, and stopped the train in the tunnel and nearly stifled all the passengers.

KITTY. No!

SIR REGINALD. Yes. I nearly got put into prison over it. As it was I was fined £200.

KITTY. There! you see. And if she fell ill in an hotel, whatever would you do? It might be extremely dangerous. You know it may take her a long time to get quite strong after all this; you'll have to watch over her, and nurse her night and day. (*Crosses round back of piano, collecting small things*)

SIR REGINALD. Oh, Helen isn't as ill as all that. If you could have heard the scene she has just been making me.

KITTY. Of course, naturally. (*Crosses L. of SIR REGINALD below settee and puts things in bag which SIR REGINALD holds*) She's blinded with sorrow. (*Crosses back to piano for more articles*)

SIR REGINALD. Sorrow! Nonsense—temper!

KITTY (*coming towards him—stops*). Oh! how can you—godfather told me she's a most even-tempered woman.

(SIR REGINALD *makes a face*.)

Isn't she an even-tempered woman?

(SIR REGINALD *whistles*.)

Good heavens! To hear you talk one might think Madame de Semlano was a most tiresome woman.

(SIR REGINALD *whistles*.)

She is a tiresome woman. (*Puts things in bag*) But that's probably only her nerves. Lots of women suffer from nerves as they get older. (*Crosses to R. of SIR REGINALD—sniffs*)

(SIR REGINALD *sniffs, too*.)

(*Crosses to B. C. for book*) Probably she's rather a

nervous temperament. You'll never persuade me Madame de Semiano is an impossible woman to live with.  
(*Coming down on his R. again*)

(*He whistles.*)

What! Do you mean to tell me that too? Good gracious!  
(*Pause*) Oh, of course, as you say, Madame de Semiano is not a friend of mine, but I'm astonished (*puts book in bag*) to hear you say these things about her, because if this is the way you speak of the woman you are going to marry, heaven only knows what you will say about me. (*Crosses to table R. for time-table*)

SIR REGINALD. Oh—but—you're such a different kind of woman; you are so—so—

KITTY (*crosses back to him, looking out trains*). I am afraid you have a very false idea of me.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, no.

KITTY. Oh, yes, you have. Why, if you were to live in the same house with me for two weeks, you'd see how you'd regret Madame de Semiano. (*Crosses behind SIR REGINALD to table L. C.*) I've no spirit. If my husband were to be cross or disagreeable, I should never resent it. I shouldn't know how to make a scene.

SIR REGINALD. Are you sure?

KITTY. Yes. You know I've a fearfully affectionate nature.

SIR REGINALD. I shouldn't complain of that.

KITTY. And I don't even know what jealousy means—no, believe me, you would be bored with me in a week; you would miss the infinitely varying moods of Madame de Semiano. (*Crosses behind him to R. C.*)

SIR REGINALD (*turning and facing her*). I should miss nothing at all.

KITTY (*on SIR REGINALD'S R., holds out hand for bag*). Well, if I'm not careful, I shall miss my train.

SIR REGINALD. Don't go—I don't want you to go.

KITTY (*closing bag as SIR REGINALD holds it*). But I must. Let us say good-bye frankly and kindly, without regret—we must never meet again—never!



*(He put bag on table behind her and catches her by the hands.)*

Up till yesterday I was nothing in your eyes, only a hyphen, only a link in the chain between you and the woman you love.

SIR REGINALD. Oh, no, no!

KITTY. Good-bye, my dear friend, and may you be very happy with Madame de Semiano.

SIR REGINALD. Kitty!

KITTY. Good-bye. Think only of Madame de Semiano.

SIR REGINALD. No—I can't! I am thinking of you.

*(She moves forward and picks up bag.)*

*(Catches hold of it, and tries to take it from her—suddenly)* You shan't go!

KITTY. You're mad! Let me pass.

SIR REGINALD. No, I won't let you pass. *(Takes her bag from her)* The idea of a dear little thing like you sacrificing herself.

KITTY. Oh!

SIR REGINALD. Madame de Semiano isn't worth your little finger—do you hear? You've absolutely—absolutely convinced me. You've tried to prove that we're not made for each other, and you've proved to me that we are. *(Puts bag on table)* Take off your gloves.

KITTY *(turns her back on him and loosens her gloves, then stands with hands in front of her)* Certainly not!

SIR REGINALD. Take off your gloves!

KITTY. Certainly not. I won't!

SIR REGINALD. You've tried to prove to me that you are—or rather that Madame de Semiano is—and you've failed—you've proved to me just the contrary. *(Pulls off her gloves and puts them on table)* Take off your hat!

KITTY *(turns her back and pulls the pins out of her hat, then stands with her head bent towards him)*. I won't! I won't!

SIR REGINALD. Take off your hat!

KITTY. I won't! I won't!



SIR REGINALD. You've tried to prove to me that my duty was—was—not—well, I don't exactly know, but you've failed—utterly failed. (*Takes her hat off and puts it on settee*) Take off your cloak!

KITTY. Certainly not. At least, I won't do that.

SIR REGINALD. Take off your cloak. (*Turns and takes her cloak off, she letting him do it*)

KITTY. Certainly not! Certainly not! (*When the cloak is off, she stands with her eyes on ground*)

SIR REGINALD (*backs, astonished and delighted*). Why, you've got on a—tea-gown!

KITTY. . Yes.

SIR REGINALD. Then—then—you didn't really mean to go away?

KITTY. No.

SIR REGINALD. Then—then—you were playing a part?

KITTY. Yes.

SIR REGINALD. Then—then—you had a reason?

KITTY. Yes.

SIR REGINALD. Then—then— (*Flings cloak on chair L. c.*) Kitty, you love me!

KITTY. Really—

SIR REGINALD. You love me!

KITTY. Yes!

SIR REGINALD. Tell me—tell me you love me.

KITTY. I love you.

SIR REGINALD. Come closer and tell me—

KITTY (*moving sideways towards him*). I—

SIR REGINALD. Come closer—

KITTY (*turns and puts her head on his shoulder*). I love you!

(*Horses' hoofs and carriage heard off.*)

SIR REGINALD (*embracing her*). Sweetheart!

KITTY. Sweetheart! (*Suddenly*) H'sh! What's that?

(*SIR REGINALD goes to balcony and looks off L. KITTY crosses to door L.*)

SIR REGINALD. It's Helen's cab. She's coming to drive me to the station.

HELEN (*outside*). Reginald! Reginald!

SIR REGINALD. What's that? (*Crosses c.*)

KITTY (*at door L.*). Madame de Semiano on the stairs.

SIR REGINALD. Helen! Let's run away.

KITTY. I shouldn't dream of such a thing—besides, it's too late.

SIR REGINALD (*picks up hat and gives it to her, and crosses up for cloak*). Nonsense! Put on your hat.

KITTY. I decline, I absolutely decline. (*Crosses B. C., pinning her hat on*)

SIR REGINALD. We'll go by the garden. Put on your cloak. (*Helps KITTY with cloak, which she puts on hurriedly*)

KITTY. I refuse! I absolutely refuse! (*Buttoning up her cloak*)

SIR REGINALD (*runs up, looks off c., then crosses down and picks up bag and gloves*) All's clear. Come! (*Holds out his hand*) Come, little wife!

(*She takes his hand; they run up to window c., stopping at window.*)

Good heavens!

KITTY. What is it?

SIR REGINALD. The station is a mile away. They'll catch us before we catch the train.

KITTY. Never! You forget Madame de Semiano's cab. She brought it on purpose.

SIR REGINALD. My darling! (*Embraces her*)

(*They run off L.*)

(HELEN enters, followed by TRAVERS. They look about.)

HELEN. Where are they? *Pointing to door B. C.* Ah! (*Flings door open. Goes into room*)

(*Horses' hoofs heard going off.*)

TRAVERS (*crosses to balcony*). No, look there! There they go, in a cab!

HELEN (*comes out of bedroom and runs to verandah*).

In my cab! Oh, the hussy! She's kissing her hand to me. Oh, Reginald, Reggie, I'm choking—I'm—

*(She is preparing to go into hysterics, when a sudden thought strikes her. She crosses to table B., seizes a telegraph form, and writes feverishly)*

“Captain Churchill, I am yours.”

*(TRAVERS, laughing, falls into chair.)*

CURTAIN.

END OF ACT III.

## PROPERTY PLOT.

## ACT I.

Green plush carpet down. Chippendale and leather suite. Pedestal writing table or desk R. On writing table or desk R.:—telephone; blotting pad and stationery; legal documents with pink tapes; three thin ditto, to tear; inkstand, pens and ink; matches in glass stand; cigarettes on ash tray; pair gent's spectacles with black tape; quantity written and stamped letters; circular blotting pad to unfold; gong bell; basket for papers; calendar. Two books (props) to fit in c. bookcase. Upholstered stool at foot of desk R. Chippendale arm-chair to L. of desk. Circular backed revolving chair to R. of desk. Chippendale chair at head of desk. Chippendale chair down R. below door. Large bookcase and imitation books up R. Large bookcase and imitation books c. (Spaces left for two books.) Three deed boxes, painted black, and on stand between window R. and bookcase c. *Printed* on top deed box, "Sir Reginald Belsize, Bart." *Printed* on second deed box, "Executors of John Andrews." *Printed* on bottom deed box, Nil. Library steps c. *by* bookcase. Chippendale chair in R. corner. Chippendale chair *between* c. bookcase and window L. To windows up R. and L. at back:—Two pairs green plush curtains; two pairs green tie-backs; two curtain poles and rings; two Holland window blinds, cords and tassels. Two green plush cushions *to* window seats R. and L. do. Mantelpiece and gilt over-mirror down L. To fireplace L.:—Oxidized steel fire-dogs and fire-irons; white stone hearth. Mahogany clock and four wedgewood vases *on* mantelpiece. Legal document, with loose *link* tape, *on* do. Upholstered arm-chair L. c.

Chippendale chair *above fire-place* L. Chippendale chair *below do.*

HAND PROPS.—Hand-bag and umbrella for Kitty. Copy of will for Madame de Semiano. Copy of clauses in will for Sir Reginald.

## ACT II.

Tesselated canvas stage cloth down. Satinwood suite, covered in heliotrope and green figured chintz. White skin rug *in front of settee* L. c. Ditto *in front of fire-place* up R. Three water-colors on wall R. and L. of door up R. and down L. above door. Two pairs heliotrope curtains, valances and tie-backs. Eight heliotrope vitrage curtains, brass rods and hooks. Grand piano up L. c. Music:—Copy of song on rest for Kitty; foreign newspapers; matches in glass bowls; ash tray; pictorial magazines; large photo of Miss Tempest in silver frame; small photo in silver frame; paper knife; small red morocco case of playing cards; silver cigarette case; three French novels; small mirror with silver frame; cut-glass bottle smelling salts; all on grand piano. Electric Hydrangea plant *on grand piano*. Three hollyhock plants in baskets (*French*) *at back of grand piano*. Small table down L. Green bowl and artificial roses, Graphic, on small table down L. Arm-chair down L. *by small table*. Cushion, trimmed with violets and *fastened to arm-chair*. Cabinet up L. Six Dresden china ornaments *in cabinet* up L. Green vase, containing "Iris," two French novels, on cabinet up L. Settee *in front of grand piano* L. c. Cushion, trimmed with violets, *on same*. Small table L. c., *between piano and settee*. Japanese tray, with handles and containing glass jug and water. Artificial geraniums in basket (*fancy*), garden scissors and glass cloth *on table* L. Electric standard lamp and white shade up L., *between windows*. Small kidney table, ditto. Green bowl and artificial roses *on kidney table*. Arm-chair up R., *between window and cabinet*. Cushion, trimmed with violets and *fastened to arm-*

*chair.* Chair with raised cushion *by grand piano.* Ditto *in front of cabinet up R.* Chair with raised cushion *in O. P. corner up stage.* chair *by writing table R.* Sheridan jardiniere *to R. of L. C. window.* Large palm *in jardiniere.* Cabinet *up R., between window L. C. and door up R.* Eight Dresden china ornaments *in cabinet R.* Vase containing artificial roses, Continental time-table, *on cabinet R.* Ottoman *up R., in front of fireplace.* Marble mantelpiece and overmantel *up R.* Artificial bank of Iris and palms *to fireplace.* Brass fender *to fireplace.* Two white-and-green bowls with artificial roses; small Ormolu clock, *on mantelpiece.* Oval mirror *over mantelpiece up R.* Writing table with drawers *up R.* Electric silver lamp and white shade; stationery case; blotting pad; telegram forms; inkstand, pens, paper and ink; green vase containing artificial roses and Iris mixed; photograph in red morocco frame; all *on writing-table up R.* Table *down R., below door.* Green bowl containing artificial roses *on table down R.*

DINING TABLE DOWN R. C.—Four electric candle lights with pink shades; white linen table cloth; two white specimen vases; two serviettes; *all on dining table down R. C.* Silver champagne cooler, containing glass as imitation ice, *in front of dining table R. C.* Butler's tray and stand *down R., below door;* silver sugar dredger, 2 champagne glasses, 2 claret glasses, 2 wine glasses, 2 salt cellars and salt, 2 mustard pots and mustard, 2 pepper dredges and pepper (*all electro*), carving knife and fork, fish slice and fork, 2 large knives, 2 small knives, 2 fish knives, 3 large forks, 4 small forks, 2 fish forks, 4 large spoons, 2 dessert spoons, large serviette *to cover tray;* *all on Butler's tray.*

*Ready off door down R.*—(1) Glass and silver salad bowl, ladle and fork, containing fruit salad. (2) Large knife, small knife, fish knife, large spoon, dessert spoon, large fork, 2 small forks, fish fork, champagne glass, claret glass, wine glass; *all on serviette.* (3) 3 soup plates, 3 fish plates, 3 dessert plates; silver soup tureen and ladle also real soup. (4) Imitation fish, contain-



ing colored sponge cake, on *electro-plated dish*. Champagne bottle, containing *Schweppe's ginger ale and labelled Pomeroy '92*. (5) Silver tray with handles. Silver coffee pot containing coffee, silver spirit lamp (*alight*), three dark blue and white china coffee cups and saucers and three spoons; silver sugar basin, sugar and tongs; silver cream jug; liqueur decanter, containing *sherry and water*; three liqueur glasses; silver cigarette box and cigarettes; *all on tray*. Artificial tea and yellow roses and creepers to *veranda up L*. One pink and one white oleander tree in *green buckets in veranda up L*.

HAND PROPS.—Square leather dress suit case, *ready off L for Sir Reginald*. Cigar case and cigar for *Mr. Travers*. Small bottle carbonate soda for *Sir Reginald*. Glass cloth for *Norbury*. *Electric door bell ready off L*.

## ACT III.

*Same as ACT II.*

Ottoman moved down by *Norbury to R. C*. Vitrage curtains to windows drawn and windows fastened. Continental time-table (as before) placed on writing-table. Two small books on cabinet up *R*. Violet-trimmed cushion removed from settee and replaced by chintz-covered cushion removed from settee and replaced by chintz-covered cushion. Chairs to be put back in their places.

HAND PROPS.—Small basket containing house keys, labelled: Key of "Cellar," Key of "Garden Gate," Key of "Little White Store Cupboard," "Latch Key." Lease of house. *All for Kitty*. Hand-bag for *Kitty*. Effects off *L*. *Cocoanuts, etc., for cab, coming and going*.

## LIGHTING PLOT.

## ACT I.

6. Two branch oxidized steel wall brackets on walls. Two open light amber arcs *R. and L. at back of windows*. Focus. *Do. From L. at back on to the office desk R*.

*and through window up L. Log gas stove for fireplace L. All lights full up. Electric bell to telephone on desk R. Lengths for doors up L. and down R.*

—How happy my lady must be, how joyful my lord must be.

Footlights quickly up *in three sight changes* as servant lights lamp (3) to:—

*Two circuits full up.*

—I am taking Sir Reginald's bag into milady's bedroom.

Lower light amber transparency *slowly down and out.*

Lower red transparency *slowly down and out.*

Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, and 5 arcs at back *slowly mask in.*

Light amber arc in bedroom up *R. changes to dark amber.*

—I drink to our happiness.

White transparency for houses and moonlight:—*slowly up.*

Nos. 1, 2, 3 and 4, and 5 arcs at back *slowly up with blues.*

—And don't take too long over this ridiculous affair.

Lower footlights (*third circuit*) *slowly down to one-half.*

## ACT II.

Electric standard lamp up *L.* Silver lamp on *writing-table R.* Electric hydrangea plant on *piano up L.* Pair of two-branch electric silver candles for *dining table R.* Footlights, ground rows, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 battens, white lengths to doors down *R. and L., light amber transparency, full up to commence. Arc lights. Light amber focus from o. p. perch on to tills at back of piano up L. (No. 1) Open white below window up L. (No. 2) Open white above window up L. (No. 3) Open white to R. of window L. c. (No. 4) Focus white from up L. on high steps on to c. of L. c. window. (No. 5) Open white behind ground row c. and R. and on transparent cloth. Open light amber in bedroom up R.*

## CUES FOR CHANGES.

——I'll arrange the flowers.

No. 3 batten *down to one-quarter.*

——Oh, he's an ideal match.

Ground rows *slowly down and out.* 1st, 2d, 3d, and 4th and 5th arcs at back change to light amber.

——Now tell me, godfather—What did she say?

Lower No. 1 batten (*first circuit*) *slowly down and out.* Follow on with *second circuit to one fifth.*

——because I hate living alone.

Lower No. 3 batten *slowly down to one-third.* Light amber focus o. p. perch *changes to blue.* 1st, 2d, 3d and 4th and 5th arcs at back *change to dark amber.*

——A man's appetite to cater for. What luck!

Lower footlights (*first circuit*) *slowly down to one-half.*

——It looks as though she actually had taste.

Lower No. 3 batten *slowly down to one-half.*

——If you mention Egypt to me I shall lose my temper.

Lower No. 1 batten (*second circuit*) *slowly down to one-half.* Nos. 1, 3, and 4 and 5 arcs at back *change to red.*  
*change to red.*

——That woman's too fond of me.

Lower No. 3 batten *slowly down and out; follow on with do.* No. 2, do., do., do.; do. No. 1 do. *slowly down to three-quarters,* do.; do. footlights (*first circuit*) *slowly down and out,* do.; do., do. (*second circuit*) do., do., do.; do., do. (*third circuit*) *slowly down to one half.*

*Red Transparency slowly up.*

## ACT III.

Ground rows *out.* Footlights (*first circuit*) *three-quarters up.* No. 1 batten (*first circuit*) *one-half.* No. 2

batten out. No. 3 batten *full up*. Light amber transparency *full up*. Nos. 1, 2, 3, and 5 arcs *medium amber*. No. 4 focus arc on steps up L. Light amber. o. p. perch, focus *light amber*.

—As Mr. Travers opens L. c. windows.

Footlights (*first circuit*) *quickly up to full*.

—As Mr. Travers goes towards door down L.

Footlights *slowly up to full*. Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 arcs at back *slowly change to white*, and as No. 4 (focus on steps up L.) changes, the o. p. perch *also changes to white*. No. 2 batten *slowly up to full*. No. 1 batten *slowly up to full*. Ground row *slowly up to full*.

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